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The Nation.

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EDITORIAL

# MEDDLING IN CHAD

Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi himself could not have invented a better symbolic example of imperialist powers ganging up on him. On September 7, French soldiers in Chad shot down a Libyan bomber with a U.S. Hawk missile. The Soviet-built TU-22 of 1961 vintage was attacking the capital, Ndjamena, in retaliation for Chad's invasion of Libyan territory.

The French provided the hypocrisy in this affair, making disapproving noises about the recent aggressiveness of Chadian President Hissen Habré while continuing to supply him with the arms to threaten Libyan territory and acting as a shield against reprisals.

The United States provided the cynical purpose. Since Chad's successful campaign against the Libyan forces earlier this year, the French had every reason to be satisfied with the balance of power in the region. Washington, however, obviously wants to escalate the conflict in order to bring down Qaddafi. The Administration has publicly approved of Habré's forays into Libya and has increased arms shipments to Chad. Habré was thus in a position to blackmail the French into giving unqualified support, as the United States seemed primed to help. But the French could have called his bluff; America is probably not ready to take over. Instead, they shot down the Libyan plane, demonstrating that they are defending not only their own neocolonial interests but also those of the United States.

The downing of a Soviet-built plane by French troops using U.S. weapons should send back to their typewriters the editorialists who have filled so much space with indignant condemnations of Libyan pugnacity. There is no need to admire Qaddafi or share his philosophy to see plainly who, in this episode, are the hawks and the hypocrites—and the potentially dangerous warmongers in this unfinished conflict.

CORYOLATRY
Alexander Cockburn

DRUGS AND THE CONTRAS
Daniel Sheehan
Leslie Cockburn
Jonathan Kwitny

OIL AND IRAN
Dilip Hiro

RADICALS IN ACADEME
Russell Jacoby

BORK v. THE FIRST
Jamie Kalven

UNDERGROUND MEMORIES
Stuart Klawans

PERIODICALS DEPARTMENT

VOICE OF THE CENTRIST

# THE FRANTIC REFLAGGING OF BORK

HERMAN SCHWARTZ

The campaign to put Judge Robert Bork on the Supreme Court is built on a Big Lie: that Bork is a moderate, flexible centrist like retired Justice Lewis Powell Jr., whom he was nominated to replace. The White House, Washington corporate lawyer Lloyd Cutler and Bork himself have all worked industriously to cover up what Bork really is—a rigid far-right activist who is not at all hesitant about using whatever power he has to further his ideology.

A few weeks after President Reagan nominated Bork, Cutler rushed to print with a piece on the *New York Times* Op-Ed page. Writing as "a liberal Democrat and as an advocate of civil rights before the Supreme Court," Cutler placed Bork in the tradition of Justices Oliver Wendell Holmes, Louis Brandeis, Felix Frankfurter, Potter Stewart and Powell, asserting he would be "closer to the middle than to the right" of the Supreme Court spectrum. No matter that Bork disagrees with all those Justices on the central issues before the Court, that Bork has scathingly criticized Holmes and Brandeis for granting too much latitude to free expression, has ridiculed Brandeis's antitrust theories, deplored Powell's affirmative-action ruling in the *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* case (and, by implication, his other decisions in that area), disagrees with Frankfurter's church-and-state views and has branded as illegitimate the rulings upholding abortion laws that Stewart and Powell have several times reaffirmed. For Cutler, Bork is "not far from the Justice whose chair he has been nominated to fill."

Eleven days later, the White House issued a

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# EXCHANGE.

## Of Drugs, Money and *Contras*

### A LIBERAL'S DOSE OF FACTS

*Washington*

In the August 29 edition of *The Nation*, Jonathan Kwitny complains in a front-page article ["Money, Drugs and the *Contras*"] that "the real" story of the *contras* and drugs (i.e., Kwitny's story) has been "obscured." He attributes "misstatements" to *contra* patrons in the Reagan Administration who knew about and concealed the *contra* drug involvement, and to "exaggerations" made by opponents of the *contras* who "obviously believe "allegations of drug smuggling activity by the U.S. government" and by "U.S. officials (including those in the supposedly 'private' *contra* arms network) [who] actually arranged and warehoused cocaine shipments to finance the war."

The unfortunate exaggerations, Kwitny complains, are advanced (to the detriment of Kwitny's "truth") "most flamboyantly by Washington lawyer Daniel Sheehan, who founded and runs the Christic Institute." Describing evidence to support this unfortunate exaggeration as "well hidden," he asserts that "on several occasions Sheehan has promised to make sources available, but has always backed out, citing danger to the sources or other complications." Such conduct "is reminiscent of the late 1970s, when Sheehan promised to provide reporters with proof that Karen Silkwood was killed because she had discovered an international plot to smuggle bomb-grade material out of nuclear fuel plants around the country," Kwitny wrote. He added that "Sheehan did not produce a single witness" to this effect in the Silkwood case.

Those sections of Kwitny's article are false in three very major regards, as even the slightest good-faith effort at checking facts would have revealed.

In his zeal to place himself in the all-too-familiar position of condemning both "extremes"—a position in which most liberal Democrats are trying to locate themselves in the struggle between the *contras* and the Sandinista government of Nicaragua—Kwitny has found it necessary to distort and even to dissemble. He does this, sadly, in order to denigrate those who he fears might otherwise be deemed by the public entitled to wear the mantle to which Kwitny himself so unabashedly aspires: to be regarded as an "accurate, yet responsible" critic of the *contra* drug smugglers.

To be specific, the Christic Institute has charged in its Federal Racketeering Act lawsuit filed in Miami in May of 1986 (five months before Kwitny even knew that there was any covert arms-supply network) that twenty-nine private individuals engaged in a private criminal racketeering enterprise to smuggle cocaine in order partly to finance the purchase of arms and explosives for the *contras*. At no time has the Christic Institute—either in its legal filings or in any public speech—"promulgated" or "advanced the theory" that the Central Intelligence Agency, the U.S. government or U.S. officials "arranged" any cocaine traffic in Central America, as Kwitny falsely states.

Kwitny is correct when he states that he "for a year . . . repeatedly asked Sheehan to provide sources or documents to corroborate his contentions" that retired Maj. Gen. Richard Secord; former C.I.A. director of covert operations Theodore Shackley and his deputy, Thomas Clines; Albert Hakim; Rafael (Chi Chi) Quintero; World Anti-Communist League president and retired Gen. John Singlaub; Miami gunrunner Ronald Joseph Martin; John Hull; and others named in the Christic lawsuit were engaged in "a mammoth conspiracy . . . to support a shadow government by drug dealing and illegal arms sales." Kwitny is simply wrong when he asserts that "on several occasions, Sheehan has promised to make sources available, but has always backed out, citing danger to the sources or other complications."

**Naming Names**

From the first day Kwitny issued a demand for the names of our sources—December 18, 1986—he has repeatedly been told that he would not be provided with any source's identity. In fact, when confronted by this flat refusal, Kwitny became very nasty and angry, as though he felt that he was somehow uniquely entitled to this legally privileged information. Indeed, he stated bluntly that if we did not reveal sources or place him in touch with the sources, he would take the public position that our factual charges were simply untrue—because Kwitny was not being put in a position to prove those facts himself.

That is the position Kwitny is taking in his August 29 article. Matters that Kwitny has not personally been shown to be true by the Christic Institute are, in fact, asserted by Kwitny to be false and labeled "unfortunate exaggerations" or "wild overstatements" that are "flamboyantly" overpromulgated to "distract attention from the verifiable facts" (i.e., Kwitny's account).

Indeed, it seems to be the primary complaint of Kwitny's sad article that his moderate "verifiable facts" are being flamboyantly overshadowed by the more dramatic charges made in the Christic Institute lawsuit.

In order to promote further his implicit effort to denigrate the veracity of the charges made in the Christic Institute lawsuit, Kwitny manufactures a third falsehood. He states that in the late 1970s, "Sheehan promised to provide reporters with proof that Karen Silkwood was killed because she had discovered an international plot to smuggle bomb-grade material out of nuclear fuel plants around the country" and that "Sheehan did not produce a single witness."

As chief counsel in *Silkwood v. Kerr-McGee*, I charged, first, that Silkwood had been contaminated by 400,000 disintegrations per minute of plutonium, which had been placed on food in the refrigerator of her house by agents of the Kerr-McGee Nuclear Corporation; and second, that Silkwood had been the target of an anti-civil-rights conspiracy, forbidden by the Federal Civil Rights Act, because she had been organizing the workers at Kerr-McGee to demand increased health and safety standards. An Oklahoma jury returned a $10 million damages verdict on the first charge against Kerr-McGee, a verdict later sustained by the U.S. Supreme Court. Kerr-McGee settled with the Silkwood estate for more than $1 million to avoid a new trial and the possibility of increased punitive damages on the second charge.

The U.S. District Court in Oklahoma did not allow the Christic Institute to put our evidence of conspiracy to the jury as a result of a ruling that the case did not fall under the Federal Civil Rights Act. In fact, the institute did develop evidence during the investigation of the case that radioactive materials were being stolen and smuggled out of privately operated nuclear facilities within the United States. Unaware of their importance, Silkwood had photocopied highly secret documents from Kerr-McGee files showing that the company was "missing" over forty pounds of bomb-grade radioactive plutonium (enough to make four to six Hiroshima-sized bombs). We never "promised" Kwitny, or any other reporter, access to the sources of this evidence. Instead, the evidence was turned over to Representative John Dingell, through his staff investigator, Peter D.H. Stockton. In subsequent closed-door hearings and F.B.I. investigations, it was verified that special nuclear materials *were* being stolen from privately operated nuclear facilities in the United States and were being smuggled—with the knowledge of certain C.I.A. employees—to Israel and South Africa, where they were used to produce nuclear weapons. Kwitny should check the record of the F.B.I. investigation of the NUMEC Corporation in Apollo, Pennsylvania, to see who the source was.

The unpleasant task of criticizing Kwitny's petty effort to denigrate those whom he believes to be threatening the status of his moderate "verifiable facts" is not meant to demean, generally, the good quality of his other work or the contribution he is making to the corpus of information necessary to inform the American people and Congress about the nature of the *contras*. It's a far cry

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# EDITORIALS.

## Writer Write-Off

Writers are incensed about a provision in the 1986 Tax Reform Act that requires them to deduct the expenses incurred in writing a book on a pro rata basis during the years in which the book actually produces income. Before the tax reform, book writers deducted expenses in the years in which they incurred them, like doctors, lawyers and self-employed merchant chiefs. Another whining special-interest group, you say? To the extent that we are all readers who benefit from the free flow of information, we are all hurt by the regulation. It will make more difficult the economically precarious lives of most nonfiction writers, who often spend years researching an investigative or historical work. Poets and novelists will also find themselves snarled in the law's unrealistic requirements. How, writers ask, can they predict the earnings life of a book, not to mention whether there will be additional income from a movie sale or an anthology permissions fee years after the royalties have stopped?

And why single out writers for special treatment under a provision originally intended to capture tax-shelter gains? A 1981 Authors League survey found that the median income of freelance writers was around $5,000. Obviously, tightening the screws on this group's deductions won't do much to reduce the deficit. Perhaps the following case history of a not-atypical author will dramatize the issue.

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I.R.S. AGENT: Good morning, Mr. Joyce. As we notified you, your tax return is being audited. Largely a matter of improper deductions for expenses.

JOYCE: (*All cunning, exile and silence*) Mmm.

I.R.S.: I see that for the past seventeen years you have deducted expenses for a long systematic literary composition known as "Work in Progress." Is that correct?

JOYCE: (*Assuming the mannerisms of a stage Irishman and tugging his forelock*) Would Your Honor be referrin' to my book *Finnegans Wake*? Faith and begorra, ye wouldn't be about puttin' the loiks of me in jail would ye?

I.R.S.: I doubt that it need come to that, Mr. Joyce, so long as you answer fully and candidly. Is this literary composition a novel?

JOYCE: (*As himself*) As novel as I can make it.

I.R.S.: Has the work earned any money?

JOYCE: Alas, no. In my time I have lived off the charity of patrons. My last book, *Ulysses*, was for years sold to tourists who smuggled it back to the States.

I.R.S.: Hmm. May I remind you, sir, that the income from pornography is considered taxable. Is your new composition of that antisocial ilk?

JOYCE: Well, the three people in the world who understand it don't think so.

I.R.S.: What is it about?

JOYCE: To vastly oversimplify, a sleeping man.

I.R.S.: And you have spent seventeen years writing such a book?

JOYCE: Yes, I have.

I.R.S.: Do you have any idea in what tax year this property will begin to generate income?

JOYCE: I have no idea if it ever will. But if it is the classic I intend it to be, it will continue to be read long after you and I are gone.

I.R.S.: You must be more specific, Mr. Joyce.

JOYCE: All right: *Ars longa, vita brevis.*

I.R.S.: I'd advise you to be responsive, sir. The I.R.S. has ways of making life unpleasant.

JOYCE: I'm afraid I can be no more precise than that.

I.R.S.: Then I would advise you to hire an accountant, and perhaps a lawyer.

JOYCE: (*To himself*) And to think my sainted mother wanted me to *be* an accountant—or a lawyer. Niver a writer. Shiver ye writhers. Writhing in Hell—Infernal Revenue! 'Tis jail, Jim, thirty years to Liffey. Or end the exile. Back to Ireland, I.R.A.land, where they don't tax authors to debt. A tax haven will be my Heaven. Yes, I said, yes.

(EXIT, *singing in a fine tenor, "A little bit of heaven fell to earth. . . . Sure they called it Ireland."*)

### FOLLOW-UP

After the September 12 issue of *The Nation* went to press, U.S. aid to Costa Rica was resumed following a six-month freeze [see Martha Honey and Tony Avirgan, "Leaning on Arias"]. Honey and Avirgan report that to obtain the resumption, President Oscar Arias Sánchez's economically hard-pressed government agreed to a number of U.S. demands, including strengthening private banks at the expense of the state-owned banking system. But Arias still faces an economic crisis as a result of the conservative Unidad Party's intransigence toward his tax package, which was defeated in Parliament. "The U.S. has passed responsibility for sinking the Arias government to Unidad," commented an Arias supporter.

# Korean Tripwire

Each year, Siberian cranes flock to the Demilitarized Zone in Korea. North and South Korea, still technically at war, have an unspoken accord to leave the great birds undisturbed. The cranes—a Korean symbol of life and a peaceful home—are an endangered species. On the DMZ, they nest amid lethal firepower, a small example of North-South cooperation suggesting that sanity can prevail over ideology.

Nearly 1 million hostile troops glare at one another across Korea's DMZ. In the 1950s, the Korean War took more than 2 million Korean lives (civilian and military), and 967,000 Chinese and 33,600 American lives. Today, with an American nuclear tripwire stretched across the Korean peninsula, a second war could likely trigger an American nuclear attack on North Korea. Until South Korea's recent political unrest, most Americans had forgotten that more than 40,000 American servicemen are stationed in Korea. Those troops are reportedly armed with some 150 tactical nuclear weapons which are stored at Kunsan Air Force Base. They are on a higher state of alert than any other U.S. forces in the world. U.S. troops sit between 480,000 North Korean and 360,000 South Korean soldiers dug in along the DMZ.

Korea is the only place in the world, besides Germany, where nuclear war could conceivably erupt with little or no prior notice. And today the political situation in Korea is far more volatile than in Germany. What's more, ever since the United States introduced nuclear weapons into Korea in 1958, it has stuck to its "first use" doctrine. This stance raises the specter of a nuclear war in Korea expanding to a nuclear shootout between U.S. and Soviet naval forces in the North Pacific. The ever-present threat of escalation lends Korea's conflict a global significance.

According to American military officers, Pentagon strategy entails defending South Korea by striking deep into North Korea, including its capital, Pyongyang. It also integrates ground and air, and conventional and nuclear, forces. This year's huge annual U.S.-South Korean military exercise, Team Spirit, was a dry run of an air-land battle deep strike in conjunction with the use of nuclear weapons. The strategy is justified as a deterrent to a North Korean blitz to grab Seoul. But many American analysts dismiss such a scenario. North Korea, they say, knows it

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cannot win a conventional war against South Korea.

More likely, we're told, North Korea plans to exploit a political crisis in South Korea by infiltrating small groups of guerrillas against whom American nuclear weapons and an air-land battle would be useless. Indeed, some political analysts argue that close U.S. ties with South Korea's unpopular military may fuel precisely such a crisis in the South. Fearing threats to its survival, North Korea, moreover, has sometimes adopted a strategy of locating military facilities near civilian population centers, rendering the use of nuclear weapons problematic. The hairtrigger offensive posture adopted by both sides along the DMZ fans mutual fears of a surprise attack. The resulting race to acquire offensive weapons strengthens each side's worst-case interpretations of the other's intentions. Today's domestic unrest in South Korea makes it appropriate to ask again if nuclear weapons should be stored on the Korean peninsula. Instead of deterring the North, those weapons may stimulate a dangerous nuclear arms race and undermine conventional deterrence. Furthermore, in a crisis, either the North or the South would be tempted to launch a pre-emptive strike to head off an imminent attack.

There is another, nonnuclear path for American foreign policy in Korea. First, the United States should encourage civilian democracy in South Korea. A nonmilitary government would be more likely to promote progress in North-South talks and keep Korea's security deadlock from simply deteriorating. To this end, the United States should withdraw its de facto support for the South Korean military's political role. Of course, only South Korean leaders can order their military back to the barracks. But the United States must clearly signal its support for such a move.

Second, the United States should demilitarize relations with North Korea by recognizing it diplomatically. Relying on the American military to communicate with North Korea through such channels as the Military Armistice Commission, rather than the State Department, has allowed the military tail to wag the diplomatic dog. Third, the United States should withdraw its nuclear weapons from Korea. It should also announce that it will disengage its ground forces when North and South Korea's offensive forces are reduced in an equitable, planned manner. The United States might also reduce the size and frequency of exercises such as Team Spirit. Fourth, the United States should initiate regional arms control talks for the North Pacific. The Korean knot can't be untied without slackening the naval and nuclear arms race offshore.

Those four steps would loosen Korea's nuclear tripwire before events in the region further deteriorate. Given the region's current tensions and instability, nuclear weapons in Korea needlessly endanger millions of Koreans and Americans—not to mention the humble Siberian crane.

PETER HAYES, WALDEN BELLO AND LYUBA ZARSKY

*Peter Hayes, Walden Bello and Lyuba Zarsky are co-authors of* American Lake: Nuclear Peril in the Pacific *(Viking-Penguin) and military analysts for Nautilus Pacific Research, a think tank on Asia and the Pacific.*

# Harvey O'Connor

On August 29, Harvey O'Connor died at the age of 90. After working as a reporter and editor on several socialist and labor newspapers between 1918 and 1930, O'Connor wrote a number of books, including *Mellon's Millions*, *The Guggenheims*, *History of the Oil Workers International Union*, *The Empire of Oil* and *Revolution in Seattle*. Between 1945 and 1948 he was publicity director of the Oil Workers International Union.

O'Connor was the first witness to take the stand in his own behalf in a trial for contempt of a Congressional committee. He had been indicted after refusing to answer questions about his political beliefs put to him by Senator Joseph McCarthy's Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations in July 1953. Although he often stated publicly that he had never been a Communist, O'Connor remained silent, on First Amendment grounds.

At his trial in Washington that October, O'Connor waived his right to a jury. Defense attorneys moved for a directed verdict of acquittal, charging that the subcommittee's questions "invaded the rights of the defendant under the First Amendment" and that the indictment failed to establish the subcommittee's authority to ask such questions. (Soon after, Judge Edward Weinfeld of New York dismissed First Amendment indictments of Corliss Lamont, Albert Shadowitz and Abraham Unger on the same grounds.)

When O'Connor's attorney Leonard Boudin asked him to tell the judge why he had declined to answer Senator McCarthy's questions, O'Connor said:

> I felt a very special responsibility as a writer—writers have no special privileges in such matters, but they do have a special responsibility, I think, in guarding the freedom of the press. If writers won't help to guard and protect freedom of the press, who can be expected to do so? So when I was summoned to Washington I felt that extra special responsibility in addition to those any citizen would have to protect the privacy of his political opinions and beliefs and associations.

In 1958, the House Un-American Activities Committee summoned O'Connor to a hearing in Newark, New Jersey. He refused to obey the subpoena and was the first potential witness to declare the committee was acting unconstitutionally. The committee cited him for contempt of Congress, but the case was dismissed in 1963. That year, O'Connor brought a countersuit to force the committee to give him the records on which it based its actions against him. Subsequently, a court ordered HUAC to make the documents available, but it never did.

On September 20, 1957, Harvey O'Connor chaired a meeting at Carnegie Hall calling for the abolition of HUAC. He also wrote a pamphlet, "For the Abolition of the Inquisitorial Committees of Congress," published by the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee. O'Connor served as the E.C.L.C. chair from 1955 through 1963. EDITH TIGER

*Edith Tiger is executive director of the National Emergency Civil Liberties Committee.*

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# BEAT THE DEVIL.

## The Cory Myth

What is it about Cory Aquino that makes people abdicate their normal mental functions? The level of public debate in this country about what is going on in the Philippines is symbolized in those editorial cartoons that show a little flower labeled "democracy" menaced by two jackboots labeled "New People's Army" and "Right-Wing Military." In the manner of President José Napoleón Duarte of El Salvador, Aquino has been etherealized as a saint of moderation, whose survival of the fifth attempted coup against her a couple of weeks ago was seen as synonymous with the survival of this same "democracy," nurtured into being by American beneficence. In the press the realities of the Philippine crisis are being forgotten, just as they have been forgotten in the cases of El Salvador and Haiti, two other nations supposedly in receipt of a sponsoring kiss of freedom from the United States.

Amid those deceptions it would be hard for the uninitiated to know that the U.S. colonization of the Philippines between 1899 and 1903 involved the death by combat or starvation of about 600,000 Filipinos; that the Chinese-mestizo elite, which defected almost en masse to the Japanese during World War II, was protected in the war's aftermath by Gen. Douglas MacArthur and then by Maj. Gen. Edward Lansdale; and that analysis of every phase of U.S. dealings with the Philippines in the past eighty-eight years demonstrates that democracy in all but the most corrupted usage of that word is the very last thing that either the United States or Aquino and the class from which she comes would ever tolerate in the archipelago.

As Benedict Anderson pointed out in an excellent article in the *London Review of Books* for February 5 of this year, Cory Aquino comes from the Cojuangco family, part of the Chinese-mestizo elite. Her father was a wealthy sugar magnate, and her uncle Eduardo Cojuangco was, in Anderson's words, "one of the most notorious plunderers of the Filipino economy" in the Marcos era. As treasurer of Jose Cojuangco and Sons Inc. for thirteen years, Aquino was intimate with the procedures of such plunder in the era she now pledges to transcend.

Transcendence, as opposed to mere repetition, can be achieved only if the economy is restructured. That, in turn, would depend on land reform, which would entail an onslaught on the very group from which Aquino sprang. As Anderson points out, it was the colonizing Americans back at the start of the century who "put up the vast fertile lands confiscated from the Spanish friars for open auction. In the bidding, the wealthy mestizos had enormous advantages, and the treasure fell chiefly into their hands. Much of the land was turned into vast plantations growing sugar and other export crops for the American market, and a true national-level economic oligarchy now appeared." Prominent in this sugar-exporting oligarchy was Cory Aquino's family.

Aquino's agrarian program has focused on exports, undoubtedly pleasing the World Bank, which has tied certain loans to export-led crop diversification. She is carrying forward an aggressive privatization program and is subscribing to the latest fad in foreign financing, debt-equity swaps. Her industrial policy calls for greater investment by the multinationals and less government interference. Labor costs have been kept low, with the minimum wage still at $2.35 a day, though the government's own figures put the cost of living at $5.73 a day. Aquino did raise the pay of the police and military, by 15 percent. This antilabor campaign also included the dismissal of one of Aquino's few progressive advisers, Labor Minister Augusto Sanchez.

Everything hinges on land reform. No less than 70 percent of the population lives in the countryside, and there are more than 5 million landless farm workers, representing about half of the peasantry, many of them sharecroppers. Aquino's first proposal was the Accelerated Land Reform Program, attacked as timid not only by the Philippine left but also by the World Bank, which confided in a report to Manila that the proposed ceiling of seventeen hectares (about forty-two acres) on land retention was far too high. Supportive of land reform as a means of deflecting the revolutionary upsurge and thereby eliminating the need for "substantial expansion in civil defense expenditures," the bank called for a ceiling of seven hectares, a figure one can set against the ceiling of three hectares in the land reforms of Japan and South Korea. The bank said the reform program's schedule was far too slow and its compensation procedures open to interminable legal sabotage.

Before the legislature assumed its duties under the new Constitution on July 27, Aquino had immense powers and could have used them. She dithered, and the opportunity died. Her new plan, the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program, resembles the earlier one and leaves to the legislature the task of refining such important details as the compensation to be received by landowners, the amount of land that can be retained by landowners and the deadline for redistribution. Because the legislature is dominated by landowners, it is patently obvious that the rural masses had better not get their hopes up too high, at least so far as Cory-style democracy is concerned.

What is being carried out, pell-mell, in this new "democratic" era is a coordinated counterinsurgency campaign, propelled by the Philippine Army, the Philippine right and the United States. A key element in this campaign has been the metastasis of death squads—more than fifty groups so far. This, once again, is reminiscent of El Salvador in the early 1980s, after the overthrow of the old junta and the resignation of the reforming members of the new one.

Not one soldier, officer or official has been indicted for human rights abuses committed under Marcos, except those individuals accused of killing Aquino's husband, Benigno. After initial hesitation Aquino has embraced the army with fervent rhetoric. In her commencement speech at the Philippine Military Academy on March 23 she said, "The answer to the terrorism of the left and right is not social and economic reform but police and military action."

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ALEXANDER COCKBURN

There are now seventy battalions in the field, as against fifty-six under Marcos. U.S. military aid more than doubled in 1986 over what Marcos got in 1985, and for fiscal 1987 Congress removed restrictions on delivery of "lethal equipment": $64 million worth of "security assistance" suitable for counterinsurgency operations. The Reagan Administration has requested $112 million in military aid for fiscal 1988. An important analysis of these developments has been prepared by Walden Bello, who was also of great assistance to my colleague Ken Silverstein as we prepared this column. Bello's report will be published later this year by the Institute for Food and Development Policy.

The bureaucratic infrastructure for counterinsurgency and terror against the left is being refined. According to articles in the *San Francisco Examiner* and in *Newsweek*, Reagan signed a "finding" last March that opened the door for a far higher level of C.I.A. activity in the Philippines, along with increased use of dirty tricks. These can be translated as every stratagem of human vileness up to and including assassination, mostly by way of the death squads, about whose progress a team led by Ramsey Clark commented in June: "The victims of vigilante violence are overwhelmingly poor farmers, workers, slum dwellers, and others who are pushing for significant land reform, wage increases and protection of workers' rights, as well as those who oppose U.S. military bases."

The increased C.I.A. presence and the surge in death squad activities were roughly coincident in time and were preceded shortly by the visits of Maj. Gen. John Singlaub. Those visits attracted wide attention. Less well noted was the first national conference, in February of this year, of right-wing vigilante groups, held in the Manila HQ of the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines, which receives funding from the National Endowment for Democracy through the A.F.L.-C.I.O.'s Asian American Free Labor Institute. The T.U.C.P. is, out of six main Philippine labor federations, the only one to support the economic policies of the Aquino government, a fact that must be considered in the light of its U.S. funding. A follow-up conference in March was sponsored by CAUSA, the political arm of the Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church.

In other words, the United States and the Philippine right have used the Aquino interregnum to regroup and prepare for an onslaught on the left. Aquino's indubitable popularity is waning (she was burned in effigy during the August 15 demonstrations against increased fuel prices), but even at its peak she was not emboldened to use the situation to any great advantage. Guns have been pouring into the archipelago to beef up the firepower of the private armies. Within a matter of months, maybe less, Aquino will most likely be ousted, or at best rendered a figurehead even more powerless than she is now. The government-influenced press in the United States, blind for six years to the horrors of counterinsurgency in El Salvador, will surely have little difficulty in averting its eyes to similar unpleasantness in the Philippines, where it regards the stakes of U.S. imperial self-interest as much higher.

In *The Nation* a few weeks ago Jefferson Morley invoked a debate over American "good intentions" regarding Nicaragua and the "altruistic" Lieut. Col. Oliver North. Those familiar with theories of literary criticism will recall the "intentional fallacy," which stresses that it's not what people say they intend to write that matters but what ends up on the page. (Aside from which, "altruistic" scarcely seems a fitting word for a man who raised no protest at the Hakim-organized private pension fund of $200,000. Morley should rid himself of the romantic bourgeois habit of thinking in essences.) People used to talk about American "good intentions," American "altruism" and of course an "American tragedy" in Vietnam. There has similarly been far too much talk about good intentions in the Philippines and far too little inclination to look at what is actually going on.

## Big John

John Huston was the first film director I ever saw. In the early 1950s at Luggala, in the Irish Wicklow Mountains, he attended the same Christmas house party as my family. Under the nom de plume James Helvick, my father had just published his first novel, ***Beat the Devil***, and we left copies of it around the Luggala house in the hope that Huston would read it, then buy it for the movies, thus saving us from penury. Huston duly perused the book, read most of it in front of me down the Luggala telephone to Humphrey Bogart in Los Angeles, and offered $10,000 as a flat fee for rights and screenplay. My father accepted, thus enabling me to have a costly education, which is why this column is called "Beat the Devil." He wrote the screenplay, onto which Truman Capote's name was ultimately infiltrated for the credits at the last moment.

Huston later came down to our house outside Youghal and decided to set portions of *Moby Dick* there, with Youghal standing in for New Bedford. By this time he had a house in Galway, redesigned at tremendous cost. Huston went to Japan and became fond of sunken Japanese baths. He yearned for one in Galway and tried to get a ship to bring back as ballast the Japanese rocks he deemed essential to the bath. All captains he sought to suborn refused his overtures, so he had the great rocks flown back at staggering expense. Irish laborers brought them in from Shannon Airport and dumped them in the field outside the house. Next day Huston could not tell which were the authentically expensive rocks, since in geological terms they were identical to the several hundred native Galway rocks surrounding them in that same field.

Huston liked to have conferences in the Japanese bath, in which he would inspect his guests. Frank Taylor, who produced *The Misfits*, told me not long ago that on his arrival in Galway, Huston rushed him to the bath for a soothing soak and pleasant chat. Later, over dinner, they had a savage argument concerning the desirability of Clark Gable kissing Marilyn Monroe (Huston disliked the idea). Taylor finally prevailed, but as he conceded defeat, Huston snarled at him, "Anyway, my dick is bigger than yours."

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# BELTWAY BANDITS.

DAVID CORN
JEFFERSON MORLEY

## ■ Courting Time

At its biennial convention last month the National Women's Political Caucus gave a surprisingly enthusiastic response to Representative Richard Gephardt. Only eighteen months earlier his Congressional campaign had contributed to the Missouri Citizens for Life and placed an advertisement in the program for its 1986 convention. "Best Wishes to My Friends of the Missouri Citizens for Life," read the ad. Since 1976, when he was first elected to the House, anti-abortion forces had counted Gephardt as a true supporter. But soon after the Missouri Citizens' gathering, Gephardt met with the group's officials and withdrew his support of the Human Life Amendment, which would outlaw abortion. He maintained it was no longer feasible, recalled Ceil Callahan, the organization's president. But, she said, a Gephardt staff member attributed the change to a new wave of aides who had convinced Gephardt he needed to appeal to "groups that play a big part in Democratic Party politics, like feminists." A spokesman for Gephardt said his stand on abortion is now more "practical." He wants increased funding of sex education and adoption, opposes Federal funding of abortion but accepts the legal right to an abortion. Gephardt, the aide remarked, "deals with issues in a pragmatic way, and he is sincere in his beliefs."

Senator Albert Gore also tried to win points with the caucus, noting that half of his campaign staff is made up of women. Well, not quite. At a press conference Gore could name only one female aide, and then incorrectly. His campaign quickly produced a list showing that women fill eleven of twenty-six positions, but his latest campaign finance report to the Federal Election Commission discloses that of forty-two political operatives, only fourteen are women.

## ■ Gore's New Republic

With Senator Sam Nunn opting out of the presidential race, the right wing of the Democratic Party is searching for a candidate. The flagship of this crowd, *The New Republic*, is pushing Gore. The magazine's owner, Marty Peretz, has given $1,000 to Gore, a former student of his at Harvard. Charles Krauthammer, senior editor and Nunn cheerleader, appeared on *Agronsky and Co.* touting Gore as "the big winner" from Nunn's withdrawal. That evidently was the official line, because the same day on the *McLaughlin Group*, fellow editor Morton Kondracke also opined that Gore was "the big winner." Even literary editor Leon Wieseltier has got into the act, raising funds for Gore.

## ■ Breaking Ranks

The dirty little secret of national security policy-makers is the military failure of the *contras*. At least two former top officials have recently defied right-wing orthodoxy to say that the *contras* are incapable of overthrowing the Sandinistas, at least on their own. The apostates are former Director of Central Intelligence William Colby and former head of the U.S. Southern Command Gen. Paul Gorman. Colby, in a *Washington Post* Op-Ed essay on August 4, argued that the *contras* are a brutal, antidemocratic bunch with no support or military skills. He recommended cutting off military aid. Of course, Colby has developed a reputation as a maverick (he supports the nuclear freeze and opposes Star Wars). The same cannot be said of Gorman; as commander of U.S. forces in Latin America from 1983 to 1985 he directed a new, ambitious and sophisticated strategy involving high visibility military maneuvers and vastly expanded National Guard exercises. He startled the Senate Armed Services Committee in January by telling them that the *contras* could not win and suggesting that further funding would be pointless. Under pressure from the Administration, he later recanted his heresy, though grudgingly. Such public skepticism about the *contras*' military prospects disturbs Administration officials because the *contra* crusade in Washington has long relied on the pretense that a rebel victory without the direct involvement of U.S. troops is possible. As the pretense is abandoned, *contra* supporters will either have to reconcile themselves to the Sandinista regime or call for the use of U.S. combat forces.

## ■ Golden Oldies?

Did Oliver North recruit Henry Kissinger and Richard Nixon to his *contra* fund-raising campaign? At the very least, North hoped to enlist the duo. In an overlooked January 13, 1985, entry in North's notebook, parts of which have been released by the Iran/*contra* committees, a checklist of things to do includes "Kissinger Re Intl fund-raising." Below that North jotted a line regarding a meeting with *contra* fund-raiser Carl Channell. Next on North's list is "Nixon Re donors (foreign and U.S.)." Underneath that, North wrote, "Call Kachigian," presumably a reference to Kenneth Khachigian, a speechwriter in the Nixon White House. Did Kissinger sit down with Channell? Did Nixon hit up his admirers overseas? A Nixon spokesman said that North and Nixon have never communicated. Khachigian, now a political consultant, noted that he knows North "fairly well" but had never spoken to him or to Nixon about *contra* fund-raising. Kissinger, off in China, was unavailable for comment, but a committee staff member told us that Kissinger and North "had substantive discussions from time to time on Central America." The staff member noted, "One thing North did well was bring people into [*contra* fund-raising] without making it appear he was bringing them in."

## ■ Fear of Lobbying

"Do you think homosexuals engage in too much or too little political activity or just about the right amount?" That, according to a *Los Angeles Times* questionnaire for White House hopefuls, is one of the issues on which candidates must take a stand. "It is reasonable to ask about the role of almost any interest group," Richard Cooper, deputy chief of the paper's Washington bureau, told us. "That's the intent of the question." But what would be the intent of a question that asked if blacks, Jews or Catholics engaged in too much or too little political lobbying?

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# ARTICLES.

BEHIND U.S. INTERVENTION

# Oil, the Gulf And the Iranians

DILIP HIRO

By the time the war in the Persian Gulf reaches its seventh anniversary on September 22, the Americans and their British and French allies will have assembled in the gulf the largest armada since the Korean War. Altogether, the three nations will deploy nearly sixty warships—destroyers, frigates, cruisers, aircraft carriers and minesweepers—not to mention numerous supply ships.

The Reagan Administration says the unprecedented buildup is to guarantee safe passage to neutral shipping in the gulf, an international waterway. Observers in Washington say that the White House is attempting to make amends to pro-Western gulf monarchies for its secret arms deals with Iran by escorting reflagged Kuwaiti tankers. Other commentators interpret the current U.S. moves as part of a design to provoke Teheran into taking direct action against American ships, thus providing Washington with an excuse to knock out important Iranian military and economic targets and get even with Teheran for holding U.S. diplomats hostage. Also, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger is reportedly intent on avenging the deaths of 241 American marines in Beirut, the result of a truck-bombing carried out by a pro-Iranian group in October 1983. Still another explanation being aired is that the purpose of the current U.S. exercise is to keep the Russians out of the region.

But the single most important reason, mentioned in passing by President Reagan in a speech in late June, has not been heard since. The purpose of the military buildup, Reagan explained, was to prevent fuel shortages in America and avoid lines at gas stations. In a word: oil. In a sentence: The flotilla insures Western access to oil in the gulf and continued Western influence over the extraction rate and pricing of gulf oil.

That influence would be undermined if Iran was to win its war with Iraq. Most military experts believe that if the two combatants were left to their own devices, Iran would emerge as the victor, thus ending the hegemony that the West has enjoyed in the region since oil was first commercially exploited in Iran eighty years ago. America understands this, and is deeply worried. (The reason for not blurting out the truth is simple: It would embarrass the gulf monarchies and provide further fuel to Teheran's propaganda machine, which routinely describes America as "a world predator.")

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By implementing a rapid U.S. military buildup in the gulf, Washington is trying to divert the Iranian war effort from its land battles with Iraq and thus retard Teheran's drive toward victory.

Those who criticize the U.S. intervention on the ground that America imports from the gulf states only 6 percent of the total oil it consumes miss the main point. America regards itself as the guardian of overall Western military and economic interests, and therefore considers any action taken to safeguard these as legitimate and rational.

Washington has all along been very clear on the subject. According to a 1975 Senate Foreign Relations Committee report, "Multinational Oil Corporations and U.S. Foreign Policy," America has pursued three foreign policy objectives since World War II: guaranteeing a steady supply of oil to Western Europe and Japan at "reasonable prices"; maintaining "stable governments" in the noncommunist, pro-Western oil-exporting countries; and insuring that "American-based firms [are] a dominant force in world oil trade." The committee concluded that these goals were "generally attained during the 1950s and 1960s." It is noteworthy that in the 1960s the oil output of the gulf amounted to 30 percent of the world total; the figure for the 1930s was a mere 5 percent.

The petroleum price explosion of the mid-1970s made little difference in the relations between the gulf states and the West. In fact, the spending of the astronomical sums earned by countries from oil exports on lucrative contracts to Western companies led to the deepening and broadening of their economic, military and diplomatic links with the West, particularly America. For twenty-four years Sheik Ahmad Yamani, Petroleum Minister of Saudi Arabia, which pos-

DRAWINGS BY J.-C. SUARÈS

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sesses one-quarter of the world's known oil reserves, put the interests of the West above those of the producing countries. Finally, even the King found Yamani's pro-Americanism too much to bear, and sacked him last October.

At present the eight countries bordering the gulf are supplying about one-fifth the oil needs of the West and Japan. Fifty-four percent of Japan's oil consumption passes through the Strait of Hormuz; the figures for Italy and France are 35 percent and 24 percent, respectively. A recent study predicts that, if present trends continue, by 1995 the gulf oilfields will be providing 30 to 45 percent of the oil needed by the West.

The gulf region has 55 percent of the world's proven oil reserves. What worries Western governments even more is that three-quarters of the 70 million people living in the area—in Iran, Iraq and the six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council—are Shiite Moslems, who consider Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini to be their religious and political leader. All of Saudi Arabia's oil is in its eastern province bordering the gulf, where a majority of the indigenous population is Shiite.

Washington recognized the gravity of the situation in December 1979, when the Saudi Shiites staged pro-Khomeini demonstrations. Following the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war in September 1980, the United States joined Britain and France in encouraging the pro-Western gulf monarchies to form the Gulf Cooperation Council, a body which could be used to summon Western aid to counter external aggression or internal subversion. In early 1981 Frank Carlucci, now President Reagan's national security adviser but then Deputy Secretary of Defense, asked NATO allies to "station troops in the gulf," and secured the immediate support of his British counterpart. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher backed the idea of a multinational Rapid Deployment Force. "There is an urgent need for a new defense policy beyond the North Atlantic," she said.

So far, Western plans have had only partial success. America and Britain have been provided with limited storage and servicing facilities for their ships and planes, in Oman. A similar arrangement exists between Bahrain and the United States. Saudi Arabia has reportedly extended landing and refueling facilities to American military aircraft.

But the West has failed to secure land bases in any of the gulf states. Despite their disapproval of Iran's behavior and their close ties with the West, the gulf's monarchs are unwilling to lease such facilities to non-Islamic powers. After all, gulf rulers claim to derive their legitimacy from Islam. Letting Western states use their soil for militarily confronting the Islamic Republic of Iran would damage their standing among their subjects.

At the center of Iran's politics, domestic or foreign, is Islam. The Iranian leadership holds up the revolution as an example of how the force of Islam can oust a corrupt ruling elite, free a country from the domination of a superpower (America) and reclaim national independence. Iran has tried to persuade the other nations in the forty-six-member Islamic Conference Organization that Islam is a self-contained, indigenous ideology for Moslems, quite apart from Western capitalism or atheistic Marxism. The Iranian leadership thus projects Islam as a vigorous, revolutionary political ideology.

But those leaders now feel that for the revolution to be more secure it must be reinforced economically on a regional basis. Therefore, they attach extreme importance to the outcome of their conflict with Iraq. They view the war as serving not only political and military objectives but also economic ones, in view of Iraq's oil riches. If the present secular, socialist Ba'athist regime in Baghdad could be ousted, they believe, its successor could be persuaded to align its oil policies with Teheran's. Also, Iraq's Shiite majority would be admitted through the portals of power for the first time in that nation's history.

Whether in the aftermath of Iraq's defeat the gulf monarchies would then be overthrown by Islamic republican revolutions is an open question. What is certain, however, is that Iran would be in a better position to pressure the rulers of those countries to heed the Koranic injunctions about consulting the community on the conduct of the government. The appropriate Koran verses read: "Take counsel with them in the affairs; and when thou art resolved, put thy trust in God" and "Those who answer their Lord, and perform the prayer, their affairs are by consultation among them." For political and religious reasons, the gulf monarchs would find it hard to oppose those strictures.

The Iranian leaders have followed those injunctions. The Islamic Republic was established in April 1979 by a referen-

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dum in which 89 percent of the electorate, based on universal suffrage, participated. Later, the republican Constitution was also approved by a popular vote.

Since then Iran has held four presidential and two parliamentary elections. The Iranian parliament, the Majlis, has emerged as the single most important political institution; its proceedings are broadcast live on radio. A visitor to the Majlis cannot fail to notice the vigor with which its members pursue their legislative tasks and needle cabinet ministers and their deputies. The Majlis has a host of specialized committees. Its Speaker, Hojatolislam Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, is the country's second-most powerful political leader.

Among other things, the Majlis provides general guidelines to the administration. For instance, every year it instructs the government, led by Mir Hussein Musavi, not to accept any foreign loans, in accordance with the Iranian revolution's commitment to achieving and maintaining economic self-sufficiency. The Majlis has consolidated the economic infrastructure, which has a strong public sector accounting for 70 percent of the nation's industrial production. It has also passed progressive bills on land reform and foreign trade nationalization. Those measures were vetoed, however, by the Guardians Council, half of whose members are clerics appointed by Khomeini and the rest laymen elected by the Majlis. The council's task is to review legislation to see that it accords with the Constitution and with Islamic precepts. Only the clerical members are allowed to determine the latter. To Western minds this may seem a diminution of the democratic process, but Iranian leaders argue that only qualified mullahs are entitled to interpret the *Sharia*, the divine law.

In contrast stand the gulf monarchies. Saudi Arabia, the most powerful among them, does not even have a constitution. Twice during the past decade it successfully pressured Kuwait's ruler to disband his country's parliament, which is chosen by a narrowly based all-male electorate, and to suspend its Constitution. Earlier Saudi Arabia had encouraged the ruler of Bahrain to do the same.

Since the gulf rulers enjoy a monopoly of power, installation of popularly elected governments would diminish their authority. Such a change would be in Teheran's interest, particularly in those countries with a Shiite majority, like Bahrain, or a sizable Shiite minority, like Kuwait.

Islamic Iran would also impress on the gulf rulers its views on the proper use of gulf oil. God has been bountiful toward Moslems by bestowing on them this precious resource in such abundance, Iran would argue. Thus, Islamic rulers must cooperate in exploiting this "Moslem resource" in such a manner as to benefit the masses, with the surplus earned by exports used to transform the region into a hub of industry and advanced technology.

Iran would insist on restricting output in order to secure the maximum price for oil. It is this prospect that sends shivers down the spines of Western leaders and that lies at the root of the present U.S.-led military buildup in the gulf.

Thus the stakes in the current gulf conflict are high. And, in the final analysis, they are more economic than political or military. □

BANKED FIRES

# Radicals in Academia

RUSSELL JACOBY

Through the late 1960s few left intellectuals sought, and fewer found, positions in American universities, generally elite outfits inhospitable to radicals and dissenters. The students and government dollars that poured into the campuses, especially after Sputnik, changed that. As faculty members, who numbered 36,000 in 1910, swelled to over a half-million in 1970, even radical intellectuals could find employment. Yet the university does not offer simply salaried and safe positions. With the demise of McCarthyism and the onset of student protest, the faculties beckoned young radical intellectuals with something more: The cultural and political fires were burning brightly on campuses.

The relationship of New Leftists to the university fluctuated wildly, depending on the year and the political faction. Some denounced the colleges as tools of imperialism or as an escape from real political activity. Many young intellectuals believed that universities could harbor a new radical culture.

Some theorized that professors, with or without students, formed a new working class: Universities replaced or supplemented factories as the locus of capitalism. By designating teachers and students as "new" workers, university Marxists could legitimize their own activities. Leftists slept better dreaming that they were part of the working class.

Even those who departed to work as community or labor organizers were seduced back by universities that seemed alive with energy, or they returned as the larger ferment abated. After several years outside school, New Leftists with an intellectual bent often realized that the best chance for a life of thinking and writing lay with the university.

The wider movement and its intellectuals probably never saw eye to eye about the university. While activists often disdained academics, New Left intellectuals largely envisioned themselves as future professors. Herein lies an irony that hints of institutional strength. Unlike the old left, the New Left frontally attacked the university. Yet young intellectuals entered it with fewer regrets.

By 1966 the notion that radicals could and should stay in the university was enjoying unprecedented success, and groupings of radical graduate students and young professors emerged in many schools. In the mid-1960s several pro-

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*Russell Jacoby is the author of* The Repression of Psychoanalysis *(Basic Books). This article was excerpted from his* The Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe. *Copyright ©1987 by Russell Jacoby. Reprinted by permission of Basic Books Inc.*

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fessors launched the Socialist Scholars Conference as a forum for radical scholarship. They optimistically assumed that fifty scholars in the country might contribute papers, and perhaps several hundred might show for the first meeting. The inaugural conference in 1965 drew nearly a thousand people; by 1967 almost three thousand New Left scholars and hangers-on attended an electric and freewheeling forum in midtown Manhattan.

Although the door slammed shut before many could gain entry, the New Left established a visible, often self-confident, presence on university faculties. How large a presence? *The Wall Street Journal*, an unreliable source on such matters, figures 12,000 Marxists now teach in American colleges. Yet the true number is impossible to determine. An inkling of the size, and change from the past, might be obtained by comparing the mid-1950s and the mid-1980s. A discussion of public radicals on university staffs in 1955 might take a dozen pages, perhaps fewer; after surveying C. Wright Mills and Paul Baran, it would begin running out of steam.

Today a discussion of radicals in the university could fill several volumes—and in fact has. Bertell Ollman, a professor of political science, and Edward Vernoff, a teacher and editor, have compiled a three-volume survey, *The Left Academy: Marxist Scholarship on American Campuses*, which goes over the writings of left-wing professors discipline by discipline. "A Marxist cultural revolution," it begins, "is taking place today in American universities. . . . It is a peaceful and democratic revolution, fought chiefly with books and lectures."

Each essay in *The Left Academy* identifies the major names and books and lists additional bibliographies; nearly all disciplines have dissenting journals, such as *Dialectical Anthropology*, *Insurgent Sociologist*, *New Political Science*, *Radical History Review* and *Antipode*. Nor is Ollman and Vernoff's survey exhaustive. Indubitably, radicals have established themselves in colleges and universities; left-wing professors, books and magazines are common; conferences of "socialist scholars" and feminist historians draw thousands.

None of this is news to conservatives, who regularly charge that the universities have succumbed to leftists. Conservative periodicals such as *Commentary*, *American Scholar* and *Modern Age* print articles almost monthly lamenting that left academics have seized the universities. "Those of us who received graduate degrees in the humanities from American universities in the 1960s," begins a typical piece, "know that a major change took place in the academy about that time." That change is what the author calls "an invasion and conquest" by left professors espousing "dialectical methodologies."

That conservative nightmare lifts with any daytime inspection of universities. What happened to the swarms of academic leftists? The answer is surprising: nothing surprising. The ordinary realities of bureaucratization and employment took over. The New Leftists who stayed on the campus proved industrious and well behaved. Often without missing a beat, they moved from being undergraduates and graduate students to junior faculty positions and tenured appointments.

The ordinary realities comprise the usual pressures and threats; the final danger in a liberal society is unemployment—denial of tenure or an unrenewed contract. In a tight market this might spell the end of an academic career. The years of plenty were long enough to attract droves of would-be professors; they were brief enough to insure that all saw the No Vacancy sign. Professionalization proceeded under the threat of unemployment. The lessons of the near and far past, from McCarthyism to the first stone thrown at the first outsider, were clear to anyone: Blend in; use the time allotted to establish scholarly credentials; hide in the mainstream.

Nor does it take much to intimidate professors; news travels fast and well. All know cases of teachers forced out, not because they were imperfect professionals but because they were something more: public intellectuals and radicals. Inevitably the cases reported in the news are those that take place in the elite and Ivy League schools; and simply by virtue of the publicity they are often "happily" resolved.

For instance, Paul Starr, a young sociologist at Harvard University, several years ago published *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*, to what *The New York Times* called "extraordinary praise." In 1984 Starr received the first Pulitzer Prize ever awarded to a sociologist. His future at Harvard seemed secure—until 1985, when he was dismissed or, more exactly, denied tenure, effectively releasing him. Why?

It seems that Starr wrote for a larger public; hence his contribution to professional sociology was suspect. The (former) departmental chair hinted that Starr wrote too much journalism, straying outside professional sociology. "If I want to be a freelance journalist," offered that professor, "then I should quit Harvard and go be a freelance journalist." *The New York Times* noted that Starr "worked alone, read broadly, took an interest in public issues. . . . He rarely wrote for an audience of professional sociologists. . . . The 'mainstream' behaves quite differently. . . . Its dialogues are academic, conducted in professional journals."

Starr was hardly thrown to the wolves. By reason of the publicity and his achievement he instantly received a position at Princeton University. Coincidentally, Princeton recently let go a young historian, David Abraham, for sloppy

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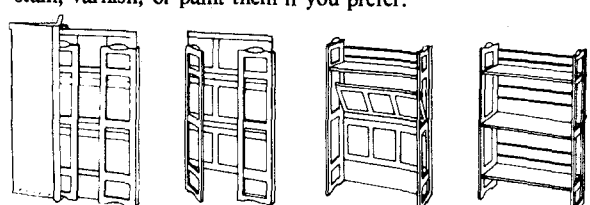

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scholarship according to his detractors; according to his supporters, it was for his politics. Yet what happened to Starr and Abraham in Ivy League schools, duly reported by the press, happens continually and goes unreported elsewhere. It is necessary only to cross the Charles River from Harvard to Boston University to find several cases which barely elicited notice.

Henry Giroux, a young professor of education, identified with a critical and dissenting tradition. He published widely, writing many articles and several books, one introduced by Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educator. Several deans and appropriate committees unanimously recommended him for tenure. The final decision, however, rested with the university's president, John Silber, a conservative little known for his devotion to civil rights. He has been quoted as saying, "It would be a pleasure to rid Boston University of Henry Giroux." He appointed Nathan Glazer, the neoconservative, to an ad hoc committee to review the other committees and recommendations. Glazer penned a savage political attack on Giroux, suggesting that he belonged to a political "sect" and had no place in higher education. Although he was outvoted (2 to 1) in the ad hoc committee, Silber accepted Glazer's recommendation and discharged Giroux.

Few noticed and no one reported on this—and Boston University is a major university in a major city. Dismissals with political overtones at Harvard or Princeton make the news; something similar at Boston University might elicit some passing comments. But what happens when a young professor is sent packing, for political reasons, from Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford, Oklahoma, or even well-known universities outside the usual news belts, such as Washington University in St. Louis? Few outside the local community will know or care.

Paul Piccone—to summarize one case of academic life outside the limelight—translated, edited and wrote on European social thought and Marxism; he published extensively not only in the journal he edited, *Telos*, but elsewhere; his essays, often anthologized, have appeared in six languages. He was a veritable dynamo of a scholar and editor. He wrote a prizewinning book on Italian Marxism, which was published by the University of California Press. He came up for tenure at Washington University in St. Louis with enthusiastic support from a wide spectrum of scholars, including Daniel Bell, Herbert Marcuse and Jürgen Habermas. The sociology department evaluated his record and voted unanimously to recommend Piccone for tenure. But he was turned down. He was also turned down on appeal, and on the appeal of the appeal. In the face of his record and recommendations, the administration decided that Piccone had wandered too far from the mainstream; his contribution, stated a dean who reviewed the matter, "bears a problematic relation to the main currents of development in the social sciences," as if the main currents were the only currents. Piccone did not find another regular post.

The situation is worse at community colleges, where a tradition of academic freedom hardly exists. Moreover, in all of higher learning, the cases that provoke some attention are necessarily those involving tenure, where committees and administrators meet and write up recommendations. Yet increasing numbers of academics, perhaps as many as one-third of the nation's faculty, are not employed in "tenure-track" positions; they teach part time or on single (renewable or unrenewable) one-year contracts. To let those people go requires no committee reports or recommendations; they are dismissed unless rehired. Hence they are particularly vulnerable to pressures of professionalization; a half-step off the beaten path and they are applying for unemployment benefits (for which they are frequently not eligible).

These pressures exacted an incalculable toll: The left did not occupy the university (the fear of the right), the university occupied and preoccupied the left. Sociologists and more sober conservatives concede that left-wing professors are less left-wing than they are professors. Their monographs and journals are the coin of higher learning. It is already clear, wrote Philip Altbach, a sociologist who surveyed the generational threat of young left professors, that "the normal politics of the academic profession, which is by and large supportive of established institutions, has reasserted itself." That was a conclusion some conservatives had already reached. *Radicals in the University*, a study published by the Hoover Institution, the conservative think tank, allows that since radicals captured the Modern Language Association in 1968, nothing has changed. "In retrospect, the spectacular 1968 successes of the radicals have proven to be ephemeral. MLA is little different from what it was before 1968." A conservative who wandered into the American Philosophical Association convention was pleasantly surprised: Radicals had made hardly any impression.

It is not too soon to draw some conclusions about this generation of younger left professors. Unlike American intellectuals born in the earlier part of the century, the left academics do not write for the educated reader. The issue is not their talent, commitment or knowledge; it is that they have surrendered a public prose and role. Since their lives have unfolded almost entirely on campuses, they direct themselves to professional colleagues but are inaccessible and unknown to others. This is the danger and the threat: The public culture relies on a dwindling band of older intellectuals who command the vernacular, the public language, that is slipping out of reach of their successors. Hence the historical witticism: Intellectuals of the irrational, far-out, hang-loose 1960s matured into a more buttoned-up, professional and invisible group than did preceding intellectual generations. One thousand radical sociologists, but no C. Wright Mills; three hundred critical literary theorists, but no Edmund Wilson; scads of Marxist economists but no Paul Sweezy or Harry Braverman. Urban critics galore but no Lewis Mumford or Jane Jacobs.

Of course, it is also too soon to draw conclusions; the story is not yet over. For today a specter haunts American universities or, at least, their faculties: boredom. A generation of professors entered the universities in the middle and wake of the 1960s when campuses crackled with energy; today these teachers are visibly bored, if not demoralized. One report found college and university faculties "deeply troubled," with almost 40 percent ready and willing to leave

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the academy. This subterranean discontent might surface, reconnecting with public life. Conservatives, suspecting and fearing this, continually rail against what they imagine is the threat from the universities. Even if they are wrong, perhaps they are right. □

# Bork

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

thick briefing book that painted Bork as a "powerful ally of First Amendment values" and other civil liberties and rights, whose views were in the "mainstream." Statistics were compiled to show that he had dissented in only 6 percent of the cases that came before him. No mention was made of the fact that there is dissent in the Courts of Appeals decisions less than 4 percent of the time.

Bork himself has given interviews to a series of newspapers in which, while disclaiming any intention to discuss "issues," he made sure to get across the point that he was a "moderate centrist." His statements in an interview with *USA Today* were typical:

> USA TODAY: Haven't you said you don't think of yourself as a conservative?
> BORK: Not as a matter of legal point of view. The position I have taken in public—that you can find in my writing—is that the judge's task is to take the intentions of the legislatures and apply to the circumstances. It's a view that has been taken by liberals and a view that's been taken by conservatives—and it's a view that's been denied by both.
>
> . . .
>
> USA TODAY: Some people say that your being on the Supreme Court could flip a lot of precedents. And you'd say, don't necessarily bet on it.
> BORK: Right.

Bork's writings have revealed a rigid reactionary, and part of the strategy to make him look like a moderate entails distinguishing between what he has said as a law professor and what he would do as a Justice. Thus, he told *USA Today*, "I think it's possible as an academic to toss out ideas with some freedom. But when you're a judge, what you're doing is important to people. You don't feel the same kind of intellectual freedom that you might as an academic."

Bruce Fein of the Heritage Foundation, a former associate deputy U.S. Attorney in the Reagan Administration and a spokesman for the right, was more candid. In an interview broadcast by the Voice of America, Fein disagreed sharply with Cutler:

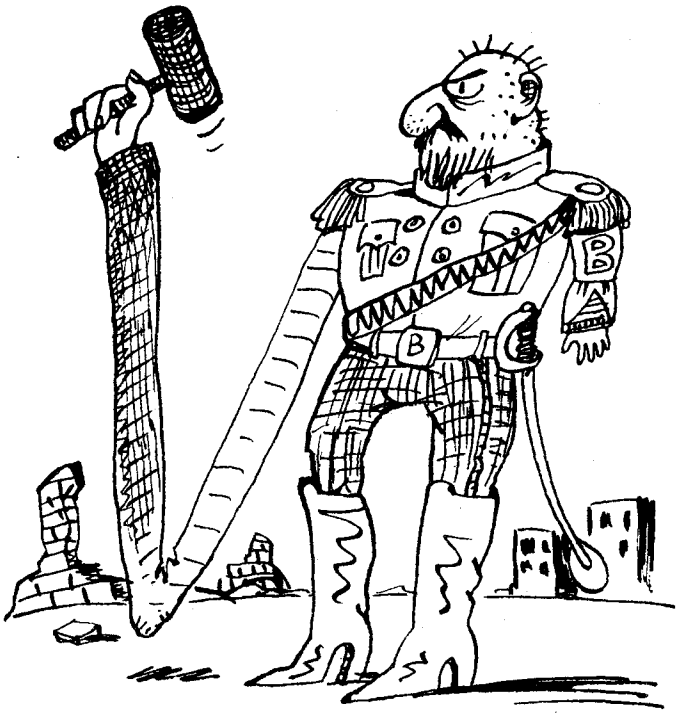
> The Bork nomination would mean, by and large, the entire docket of the Court would turn a conservative hue, rather than just half, as it's been over the last decade. By and large, Presidents get what they want. I think Judge Bork would vote the way President Reagan would anticipate.

And Cutler's own credibility in this matter is somewhat suspect. As evidence of Bork's liberalism, he cited and quoted from Bork's opinion in *Ollman v. Evans and Novak*, in which Bork came out for expanding press freedom from libel suits when criticizing political figures. Last year, however, Cutler also testified that Antonin Scalia was a centrist. As evidence of Scalia's liberalism, he cited the same *Ollman* decision. The catch is that Scalia and Bork were on opposite sides in the *Ollman* case and had sharply disagreed.

Presidents have often tried to shape the Court in their image and, as Fein says, "usually successfully." Franklin D. Roosevelt transformed the Court with his appointments and Richard Nixon achieved what he intended. But both those Presidents' goals were limited. Roosevelt only wanted to halt the Court's interference with governmental efforts to direct the economy. Nixon's main goal was to overturn the Warren Court's criminal justice rulings.

Reagan's agenda is much broader than either Roosevelt's or Nixon's. He is trying virtually to end the Supreme Court's role in advancing individual rights. The Administration has not only attacked the Court's rulings on affirmative action, separation of church and state, abortion, equal protection and criminal justice; it has also challenged the legitimacy of the Court's entering these areas at all. Attorney General Edwin Meese 3d's verbal assaults on the incorporation doctrine (which requires state and local officials to adhere to the Bill of Rights); his rejection of the Supreme Court's traditional role as the ultimate expositor of the Constitution; and his criticism of decisions that depart from what he considers to be the "original intent" of the Constitution's framers are expressions of that attitude.

Bork's record, on and off the bench, is tailor-made for the Reagan Administration's agenda. Like Meese, he has




*Herman Schwartz, a contributing editor of* The Nation, *is a professor of law at American University and editor of* The Burger Years: Rights and Wrongs in the Supreme Court 1969-86 *(Elisabeth Sifton Books/Viking).*

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assailed not only the specific rulings but their legitimacy. And his record on the bench shows that despite constant reiteration of his fidelity to "judicial restraint," he is aggressively activist in furthering his views, regardless of judicial precedent and even the clear will of Congress.

Bork's hostility to the Court's decisions on abortion, affirmative action and school prayer is well known, and on page 269 Jamie Kalven considers Bork's views on free speech. Less known are Bork's views on access to the courts, antitrust and discrimination; the White House and Cutler did not mention the first two and omitted much about the third.

A legacy of the Warren Court is the availability of a Federal forum for people injured by government or private misconduct. Since his first days on the bench, Bork has gone out of his way to undo that legacy. A study released by the A.F.L.-C.I.O. found that in seventeen out of seventeen nonunanimous cases raising access issues he used a variety of procedural techniques to deny a litigant his day in court. Lack of standing to sue and governmental immunity have been his favorite grounds. Even when a majority of judges have voted to throw out a case on the substance of the claim, Bork has written a separate opinion challenging the court's authority to hear the case.


# JUSTICE BORK?

## Abortion, free speech, civil rights, race relations . . .

In October 1983, and June 1984, Jamie Kalven provided Nation readers with a grounding in the reactionary constitutional philosophy of Judge Robert Bork. Copies of this timely set of articles are now available for $2 each; $1.50 each for orders of 10 or more.

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Thus, Bork has held that the homeless have no right to challenge a decision by the Administration not to establish a "model shelter" as promised; that Medicare patients may not challenge an effort of the Department of Health and Human Services to prevent the courts from reviewing denials of claims; that Haitian refugees may not challenge a government policy of stopping refugees on the high seas; and that Congressmen may not challenge the President's use of the pocket veto.

Bork's pocket-veto opinion—a dissent—reflects his judicial activism and his deference to presidential power, the most publicized example of which was his firing of Archibald Cox as Watergate special prosecutor. Congressmen have been filing challenges to the pocket veto in the District of Columbia for more than ten years, and in an unbroken line of decisions the courts have agreed to hear them. Bork concedes this but, together with Scalia, has made it clear that he is quite ready to overturn those precedents (an attitude Scalia displayed in his first year on the Court, voting to overturn or "re-examine" no fewer than four leading cases, one thirty-seven years old).

Bork's activism on this issue is reflected as much in his method as in his results. One of the cardinal principles of judicial restraint is that, whenever possible, the case should be decided on nonconstitutional grounds. Bork has nonetheless relied on the Constitution in almost all his standing-to-sue decisions, despite the availability of nonconstitutional alternatives, so that if his views prevail, even if Congress wanted to grant some people the right to sue, it could not.

Bork's antitrust jurisprudence, both on and off the bench, is also a good indicator of his ideology and the zeal with which he pursues it. Bork is particularly noted for an article attacking a seventy-six-year-old Supreme Court decision that the Sherman Antitrust Act prohibits a manufacturer or wholesaler from telling a customer what to charge the next buyer. This practice, which Congress had allowed the states to exempt from the antitrust law if they chose, added millions to retail prices until Congress repealed the exemption in 1975. Bork has not changed his mind on this issue, and once on the Supreme Court, he would almost certainly seek to overturn the 1911 decision.

Bork would also eliminate most restrictions on "horizontal" mergers between competitors and all limitations on "vertical" mergers, those between a firm that supplies a commodity and one that uses it. In 1950, in the wake of a huge acquisition by U.S. Steel, Congress passed the Celler-Kefauver Act, which imposed tight controls on such combinations. Fears of economic concentration and harm to small businesses were widely recognized as Congress' chief concerns, as they have been since the Sherman act was passed in 1890.

But what Congress wants means little to Bork. In a tortured reading of the legislative history of antitrust laws, Bork concluded that the evidence showing what Congress wanted to accomplish was "inconclusive." But, he said in a speech in November 1986, even if it were clear that Congress indeed had been motivated primarily by the fear of economic concentration and concern for small business, that

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"would not matter," because the Constitution does not allow Congress to tell the courts to enforce such values. No precedents or authorities are given for this novel view, which flies in the face of a series of decisions stretching back to when the Sherman act was adopted. Once again, Bork, the advocate of judicial restraint, has created a constitutional argument, so that even if Congress explicitly told the courts to be concerned about economic concentration, they and Judge Bork could ignore it.

The District of Columbia circuit gets few significant antitrust cases, but in the one that Bork got his hands on, *Rothery Storage and Van Company v. Atlas Van Lines, Inc.*, he went far beyond what was required in the case, writing his own views into the law. On the Supreme Court, Bork's impact on antitrust matters could be immense. Few other Justices seem very interested in the field, and he would have little trouble finding allies among his fellow conservative Justices for his anti-antitrust crusade.

Bork's views in this area are part of a generally pro-business ideology. A study by Columbia Law School students of rulings by Reagan appointees to the Courts of Appeals in nonunanimous cases found that in eight cases where business and industry groups sued Federal agencies, Bork voted for the business groups seven times, whereas public interest groups that sued the agencies won in only one out of eighteen on which he sat. In one notorious case, Bork stood a forty-year-old utility law doctrine on its head in order to help a power company compel its customers to pay for a canceled $400 million (with interest) nuclear plant. He has upheld a Food and Drug Administration rule extending the time color additives of questionable safety could stay on the market pending tests, and in cases involving air pollution, worker safety and labor-management relations he has ignored his usual deference to administrative agencies to overturn rulings that went against business.

Bork's views on laws barring racial and sexual discrimination also show his authoritarian side. In a 1971 law journal, he wrote that "most of substantive [i.e., non-procedural] equal protection is . . . improper. . . . The Supreme Court has no principled way of saying which non-racial inequalities are impermissible." Precedents, some set forty years ago, were challenged as "improper," including decisions protecting illegitimate children and welfare recipients; rulings prohibiting judicial enforcement of racially restrictive housing covenants, sterilization of selected groups of felons, and poll taxes, as well as the case mandating the one person, one vote principle. Although he has since tried to back away from those views by calling them "academic," he has also said that they represented the culmination of seven years' hard thinking and debate with his mentor, the late Yale Law School Professor Alexander Bickel. And this year he reiterated that "I do think the equal protection clause probably should be kept to things like race and ethnicity."

Bork might not try to put those precise views into effect, but they are based on a profound predisposition toward judicial immobility where the protection of individual rights is concerned, and a methodology he has never repudiated—that the only valid sources of constitutional law are the text, history and structure of the Constitution. Those predispositions will inevitably emerge in his decision-making on new issues that come before him.

Moral Majority leader Jerry Falwell has declared that "We are standing at the edge of history. Our efforts have always stalled at the door of the U.S. Supreme Court and [the Bork nomination] may be our last chance to influence this most important body." He's right, and not because Bork is a centrist. □

# Bork v. The First

JAMIE KALVEN

Supporters of Supreme Court nominee Robert Bork are making a concerted effort to portray him as an open-minded moderate. Toward that end, they make much of his views on the First Amendment. His work in this area, they say, shows that he is more sensitive to civil liberties and less ideologically rigid than his critics suggest. They acknowledge that he advanced an extremely narrow interpretation of the First Amendment in a 1971 article in the *Indiana Law Journal* but argue that his more recent pronouncements, seen against that background, testify to his capacity for intellectual growth. The press has, for the most part, accepted those claims uncritically. The Senate Judiciary Committee should not, for this portrait of Bork as a champion of First Amendment values has virtually no basis in fact. On examination it proves to be based on nothing more than a single concurring opinion and an ambiguous, self-serving reply to criticisms published in these pages.

In the October 1, 1983, issue of *The Nation*, I analyzed Bork's 1971 article to show what his general approach to the Constitution would mean for one highly valued tradition. When the *American Bar Association Journal* ran an item about my article under the memorable title "Here Comes Attila the Hun of the Constitution," Bork responded angrily. His reply, published in the *A.B.A. Journal*, was at once heated and carefully crafted. In tone it seemed to disavow the 1971 article, implying that I had been somehow unfair to take seriously what he had written thirteen years earlier; in fact it conceded very little. On June 16, 1984, in a second article in *The Nation*, I posed the questions that his reply had left unanswered. Bork did not respond directly. He did, however, address First Amendment themes in another forum.

While the *Nation/A.B.A. Journal* exchange was in progress, the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, on which Bork sits, heard arguments in *Ollman v. Evans and Novak*, a libel case. Some months later it ruled that the statements at issue were protected under the First Amendment. Bork took the occasion to file a concurring opinion, in which he expressed concern about the rising incidence of libel suits against the press. He wrote eloquently

*Jamie Kalven is the editor of* A Worthy Tradition: Freedom of Speech in America, *by Harry Kalven Jr., to be published in January by Harper & Row.*

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about the necessarily rough-and-tumble character of political discourse in a free society and offered some thoughts on how libel law might best be developed. The opinion is lucid and helpful. It is not, as some of his supporters would have us believe, the Magna Carta.

It would be ungenerous to dismiss the *Ollman* opinion as merely an attempt by Bork to counter the image of himself—broadcast to 340,000 lawyers by the official publication of the organized bar—as a menace to the free speech tradition. It would be equally inappropriate, however, to disregard the timing and surrounding circumstances of the opinion. For this is just one of many instances that have stirred suspicions as to whether Bork's actions are dictated by principle or by strategic considerations arising from his campaign for a seat on the Supreme Court. As they review his career and writings, the senators who will vote on Bork's nomination must take care not to misread opportunism as evidence of an open mind.

Nor should they be deluded into thinking the *Ollman* opinion a significant departure from Bork's earlier philosophy. On the contrary, it is wholly consistent with the First Amendment theory he advanced in 1971. At the heart of that theory is the idea, associated with the landmark libel decision in *New York Times v. Sullivan*, that the central meaning of the First Amendment resides in the protection of the public debate essential to democracy. So far so good. But he proceeds from that premise to the harshly narrow conclusions that First Amendment protection should be limited to "political speech" and that there should be no constitutional impediment to the suppression of speech that "advocates forcible overthrow of the government or the violation of any law."

Neither Bork's *A.B.A. Journal* reply to my article nor his opinion in *Ollman* discloses to what extent and in what respects he continues to subscribe to that theory. The Senate Judiciary Committee should question him closely about this. There are several lines of inquiry:

§ In the *A.B.A. Journal*, Bork stated that he no longer takes the view that First Amendment protection is limited to political speech: "I have long since concluded that many other forms of discourse, such as moral and scientific debate, are central to democratic government and deserve protection." The phrasing of this apparent recantation is unnerving. What about literature and art? Do they fall within those "other forms of discourse"? On what basis would he distinguish the nonpolitical speech he would protect from that which he would not?

§ Bork would deny constitutional protection to speech that advocates the violation of any law. Does that include advocacy of civil disobedience? Under his theory would it have been constitutional for Alabama to jail the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. for giving a speech urging sit-ins at segregated facilities?

§ Bork's *A.B.A. Journal* reply was silent on the issue posed by the advocacy of forcible overthrow of the government, although my article had sharply challenged his views on this question. The issue is central to political freedom. Such advocacy is typically part of a larger political critique. Hence to draw the boundaries of permissible advocacy is also to determine the limits of permissible criticism. Starting with the elaboration of the "clear and present danger" test by Justices Oliver Wendell Holmes and Louis Brandeis in the years following World War I, the Supreme Court has strived to fashion constitutional standards that allow for the fullest possible protection of political criticism while curbing advocacy as it approaches the threshold of criminal action. In 1971 Bork curtly dismissed that line of doctrinal development. Does he still regard the clear and present danger test as an unwarranted judicial invasion of the legislative domain? Does he still believe that the development of First Amendment doctrine should have stopped with *Gitlow v. New York*, a case decided in 1925 and long since repudiated, in which the Court held that legislatures should be free to suppress any advocacy of force or the violation of law, no matter how deeply embedded in political criticism, no matter how general and remote from action? (The senators might present Bork with the speech at issue in *Gitlow*—a pamphlet about which Justice Holmes, dissenting, tartly observed, "Whatever may be thought of the redundant discourse before us, it had no chance of starting a present conflagration"—and ask him if he would allow it to be suppressed today.) Does he remain prepared to argue that the purpose he discerns in the First Amendment—protection of the political criticism essential to democracy—is best served when the task of determining the outer limits of acceptable criticism is left to the majority and to the government officials criticized?

Inquiry into Bork's First Amendment views has significance beyond the obvious importance of the freedoms at stake. This is the ground his supporters have chosen in their efforts to soften his image. Once the mirage of Bork as an ardent guardian of the First Amendment is dispelled, the pattern underlying his position on various constitutional issues emerges with harsh clarity. It is a pattern of unrelenting hostility to the entire enterprise of judicial review for the purpose of protecting individual and minority rights. When Bork and his supporters use the words "judicial restraint" to describe this orientation, they defame an honorable tradition. To reject the Bork nomination is not to reject that tradition. It is to reject a radical program fundamentally at odds with the way most Americans, conservatives as well as liberals, think about law, justice and the Constitution. □

**SUPREME COURT WATCH REPORT ON JUDGE BORK**

The Supreme Court Watch project of The Nation Institute has produced an exhaustive analysis of Robert Bork's positions on several civil rights and civil liberties issues. To order a copy, write Emily Sack, director, The Nation Institute, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011. Please include $4 for shipping.

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# EXCHANGE.

(*Continued From Page 254*)
better than the tawdry business of trying to promote himself as the only "responsible" investigator of the *contra* drug connection by falsely denigrating those who do not open sources to him.

*Daniel P. Sheehan*
*General Counsel*
*Christic Institute*

## FLIGHTS OF FANCY

*Washington*

Jonathan Kwitny is entirely correct in stating that there is plenty of evidence linking the *contras* to drug smuggling. It is unfortunate, therefore, that he so blithely takes credit for setting the record straight on this explosive topic. Before readers accept his self-portrait as the only careful, objective reporter to address the story, they should understand the degree to which he offers other people's researches as his own as well as seriously, and perhaps willfully, misrepresents some important facts.

Kwitny states that "in the press, the real and disturbing story of *contras* and drugs has been obscured by misstatements and exaggerations." Of the journalists working on the story, Kwitny is the only one I know who fits that description. Reporters who have published stories in *Newsday*, *The Miami Herald*, the *San Francisco Examiner* and *The Boston Globe* have been notably restrained in their conclusions. As a CBS News producer I worked on this story for nearly two years and, with the help of two excellent investigators and a diligent and courageous correspondent, produced three stories on the *contra*-Central Intelligence Agency drug connection. Yet Kwitny, on the basis of six months' research, loftily proclaims that "major television . . . news organizations" (by which he appears to mean us on CBS's *West 57th*) "uncritically" accepted whatever they were told by drug smugglers.

The fact that the *contras* are mixed up with drug smugglers has hardly been lying around waiting to be revealed by Kwitny. Bob Parry and Brian Barger of the Associated Press wrote about it as long ago as December 20, 1985. Seth Rosenfeld of the *San Francisco Examiner* reported in March 1986 about the case of Julio Zavala, the cocaine dealer and friend of *contra* leader Vicente Rappaccioli Marquis, and in June 1986 about another cocaine-dealing *contra* supporter, Norwin Meneses-Canterero. Interestingly, Kwitny credits Rosenfeld only with the Meneses story, thereby implying that Zavala has been nailed solely through the author's own investigative skills.

The other current cases cited by Kwitny gave me a strong sense of *déjà vu*, for I shot interviews with Steven Carr, Jesus Garcia, Peter Glibbery, George Morales, Octaviano Cesar and Gary Betzner quite some time before Kwitny arrived on the story. (Carr had been dead three months before Kwitny set off to see "what could be proved or disproved about the various allegations.")

Had Kwitny paid close attention to the *West 57th* broadcasts and simply recycled same, I would have been sincerely flattered. The trouble is that he has pilfered information where it suited him while ignoring or misunderstanding it when it conflicted with the main thrust of his article—proving that the C.I.A. is not and has not been *actively* involved in the *contra* drug trade.

The major smuggler Kwitny devotes most of his attention to is Morales, of whom he says, "Acknowledging that he hopes to get his sentence reduced, he has talked for hours on end to many reporters, including myself, and testified last month before a Senate foreign relations subcommittee. Much of his story appears to be untrue—which is unfortunate, for his wilder overstatements have distracted attention from the verifiable facts." As it so happens, I well recall how reluctant Morales was to talk at all about his activities, and it was only in November 1986 that we at CBS News persuaded him to go public. We spent not hours but many days with Morales, and then many more months checking what he had to say. It is curious that Morales would have confided only to Kwitny (whom he admitted he did not particularly like) that he was talking in the hope of getting a lighter sentence. In fact, the only offer Morales has received of a lighter sentence came, in the presence of his lawyer, from a government official who was trying to persuade him not to talk to Congress. (He turned the offer down.)

### The $400,000 Hamburger

Kwitny reports that Morales claimed "the C.I.A. approached him in 1983 with a plan to smuggle dope to finance the war against the Nicaraguan government." Wrong. Morales has always maintained, on and off camera, that the C.I.A., in the shape of its (now former) operative Octaviano Cesar, approached him for help only in March 1984, after his indictment on major smuggling charges. The quid pro quo was that his indictment would be "taken care of."

One does not have to rely on boasts from Octaviano Cesar to judge his connection with the C.I.A. We spent countless hours checking that fact alone, and were satisfied that he was indeed an agency operative on the testimony of no fewer than eight reputable sources, ranging from leading *contras* to senior Reagan Administration officials. Cesar himself told us in a lengthy interview taped in January 1986 that he did indeed approach Morales at his office at Opa Loca Airport, outside Miami, for *contra* "aid," which eventually materialized in the form of planes, pilots and cash. Cesar may, as Kwitny states, dodge the question, but only when faced with Kwitny. His answer has been available since June 1987 in transcripts of *West 57th*, as freely handed out by CBS.

Cesar went so far as to admit in our interview that he had traveled to the Bahamas with Morales, though he claimed that they went there purely to have a hamburger. The unfortunate Cesar was unaware, as is Kwitny (with rather less excuse, since we broadcast the fact), that U.S. customs had a signed declaration from him, stating that he had brought back $400,000 in cash from the hamburger trip with Morales. This, incidentally, slightly diminishes Kwitny's revelation that "the *contras* obtained a minimum of $350,000 from one drug smuggler alone."

For what Kwitny has decided is the real story of Morales, he has relied on the word of Marta Healey. He cites her as the sole source of his contention that Morales sought out the *contras*, without the intervention of the C.I.A., after his indictment in order to help with his legal problems. Why the wife of one notorious drug smuggler (Richard Healey) should be credible while Morales is not escapes me. The fact is that Morales, who does indeed know both the Healeys, freely admits to having helped the *contras* with cash and houses prior to 1984. It was, he says, only after his indictment that he was approached by C.I.A. man Cesar with the offer to get more directly involved.

Other than Marta Healey, Kwitny bases his dismissal of Morales's story on what, even for him, is a slender thread. That is the vexed question of the length of John Hull's airstrip. Drug smuggler Gary Betzner stated on *West 57th* that at the behest of Morales he had flown guns to the northern Costa Rican airstrips of John Hull, an American rancher and, according to *The Washington Times*, admitted C.I.A. operative. While "major television . . . news organizations quoted [the drug smugglers] uncritically" (that means *West 57th*), the indefatigable Kwitny set out to check out the claim and, damningly, he found that the strips were more than 1,000 feet shorter than Betzner or Morales had said.

Kwitny might have told us how he "carefully" measured two airstrips several hours' drive apart in the day and a half he spent at Hull's ranch. He might also have told us exactly what he found the length of those airstrips to be, a figure that he curiously omits. He is, however, at pains to display his diligence, informing us that he checked the runway requirements of the planes used, Cessna 404s, with the aircraft and engines' manufacturers. From these researches he deduces "conclusively" that Morales's and Betzner's story of having flown arms and drugs for the *contras* at the behest of the C.I.A. can be dismissed.

Not so fast, Jon. When we interviewed Betzner in January 1987, two months before Kwitny spoke to him, he told us that the length of the Hull strip on which he landed

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(the one next to Hull's house) was "3,300 feet." At the end of the interview we gave him a copy of the standard Costa Rica aviation map, which is of very high quality. (The map noted a runway length of 3,301 feet.) We also asked him to pick out the second strip. He unerringly pointed to the spot and gave a description of the surrounding landscape. When we later visited the strips in question we found that Betzner's descriptions had been accurate in all respects. A confidential customs informant also told us Betzner had landed on those strips. I should also note that, contrary to the impression conveyed by Kwitny, Hull's strips are not La Guardia Airport. They are surfaced with grass and at either end there is . . . more grass.

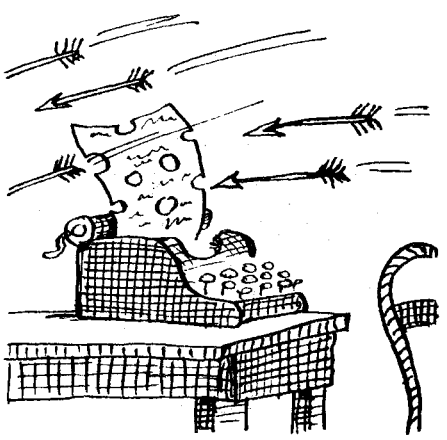
Would 3,301 feet be too short on which to land a Cessna 404, thus proving Betzner a liar and exonerating the C.I.A.? According to *Jane's All the World's Aircraft*, the Cessna 404 has a landing run at maximum weight of 1,100 feet and a takeoff run of 2,367 feet. Kwitny may enlighten *Nation* readers in the future with the results of his day as a Costa Rican surveyor, but he did tell me the figures soon after he returned from visiting Hull, and they were more than 3,300 feet. So did Kwitny really check with Cessna?

Kwitny states with certainty that the plane used in Betzner's first run was purchased three months after the trips to Hull's ranch were made. Kwitny has the wrong plane. It appears he is referring to the Titan N5273J that was purchased with the funds from the Bahamas hamburger trip; that plane was donated in October 1984. Flight logs show that plane (used by *contra* leader Edén Pastora until Cesar took it back) was flown by cocaine trafficker Geraldo Duran from Ilopango Air Force Base in El Salvador to Hull's ranch four times in December 1984 and in early 1985. This brings up yet another point: Pastora told *West 57th* that his pilots have flown Titans in and out of Hull's strip, which Kwitny claims is too short.

**What's the Beef?**

Kwitny has not been able to catch out drug smuggler Michael Tolliver on the runway lengths at Homestead Air Force Base in Florida, which is where Tolliver told *West 57th* he landed 25,360 pounds of marijuana in March 1986. But our investigator nevertheless says that Tolliver's familiarity with features of the base is "a slender thread on which to hang so weighty an accusation." I do so wish Kwitny would pay attention when he watches TV. We showed a picture of Tolliver's plane, which belonged to a company called Vortex whose executive officer was a major drug smuggler and which had received a hefty handout from the State Department to fly "humanitarian assistance" to the *contras*. I also commend *The Boston Globe* to Kwitny, or at least the issue of this April 27, in which a senior U.S. Customs Service official is quoted as saying that Tolliver probably did fly into Homestead with his grass, though only as a "freelancer." (How a freelancer unloads twelve tons of a bulky commodity like marijuana at a U.S. Air Force base without anyone noticing is beyond me.)

Fortunately or otherwise, Kwitny missed the last of the *West 57th* broadcasts on the C.I.A.-*contra*-drugs connection, which featured, among other matters of interest, a certain Ramon Milian-Rodriguez. Rodriguez was sentenced in 1986 for his role in laundering the bulky cash flow of a Colombian cocaine cartel. He claimed on the show that he had been approached by a veteran C.I.A. man asking for a $10 million contribution to the *contra* cause. He later told a closed session of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Terrorism, Narcotics and International Communications that the man who asked him, and whom he obliged, was none other than George Bush's friend Felix Rodriguez. The dapper Milian, who is currently looking at the wrong end of thirty-five years inside prison, remarked in our interview that collaboration between the C.I.A. and the drug smugglers is nothing new.



Now for the big mystery: What, specifically, is Kwitny's beef? Why, for example, does he take time off for a spiteful attack on Danny Sheehan, whom I have always found to be extraordinarily helpful and forthcoming with sources and backup material, and whose Christic Institute lawsuit, filed in May 1986, beat a lot of investigators, including Jonathan Kwitny, in delineating the secret *contra* supply network managed by Maj. Gen. Richard Secord and others.

Therein may lie a clue. Kwitny has been beavering away for some time on his book about the Nugan Hand Bank. Despite its subtitle, "A True Tale of Dope, Dirty Money and the CIA," and the promotional space so kindly made available by *The Nation*, there is not much to be learned from the book about the nefarious goings-on in Central America. Thus, while researching former C.I.A. man Thomas Clines and Secord, Kwitny, unlike Sheehan, missed what they were up to in *contra*land. That is Kwitny's way of denigrating the (successful) competition. Too bad. *Leslie Cockburn*

**KWITNY REPLIES**

*New York City*

I regret that Daniel Sheehan and Leslie Cockburn were angered by one sentence, which they perceived as both a know-it-all boast and a direct attack on them (the sentence reads, "And in the press, the real and disturbing story of *contras* and drugs has been obscured by misstatements and exaggerations"). Ironically, the construction that they perceived as boastful was not mine but that of a *Nation* editor. I certainly approved it, and think that editor did an extraordinary job of helping point and hone a complicated piece, but I would have changed this aspect of his new lead had I read into it what Leslie did.

When I wrote the phrase "real and disturbing story," I juxtaposed it against the officially accepted view that there is no drug link at all; it was not intended as a jibe at colleagues. *Nation* editors in New York had pressed me for weeks to deal more explicitly with specific stories in the press, and I fought them off, not wanting to turn an exposé of *contra* use of drug money into an exposé of colleagues. In retrospect, their advice on explicitness would have solved some problems, though I still think my refusal was merited.

I now not only regret the sentence, but regret and would retract the entire piece to save my long and valued friendship with Leslie and her family. That is why, after I discovered flaws in the George Morales–Gary Betzner story, I went to tell her and to say that I would have to note this in print but would try to mute the reference and bury it, which I did. I continue to regard her with high professional esteem and personal affection, and I hope and expect her new production company will flourish, which she deserves.

Nevertheless, after reading both letters, I find not a word in my article that needs changing on grounds of accuracy or fairness, and only one item that I might have included had I looked into it as I should have.

As to stealing stories: Seth Rosenfeld did discover the Zavala story. I did not claim credit for it, but specifically credited it to the Costa Rican reporter who nailed it down, Guillermo Fernandez-R., a real unsung hero. I thought crediting Rosenfeld in the article's following paragraph with another story would cover him. As to *The Boston Globe*'s story, I not only read it but visited its main author, Mark Hosenball, who said my conclusions about Morales, Betzner and Michael Tolliver accorded with his own suspicions. His story had pointed out holes in the U.S. Customs Service system that potentially would allow drug flights to come into the country uninspected, something I decided not to include in an article that was under heavy length pressure, but I certainly meant no disrespect to Hosenball.

Brian Barger and Bob Parry did indeed report in December 1985 that the *contras* were running drugs. The story didn't identify a single instance of it, and the sources were

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anonymous. Hearing early in 1986 that Barger was upset the story hadn't gained wider acceptance, I called him and asked if he could supply any specifics by which the story could be corroborated; he declined.

I never suggested, even by implication, that I uncovered the stories of *contra* supporters Jesus Garcia and Steven Carr or of *contra* mercenary Peter Glibbery. I did apply some skeptical tests to those stories that I had not seen elsewhere.

The idea that Morales first told his story in November 1986 is precisely what the U.S. Attorney's office in Miami said as to why the office ignored Morales's story—that he didn't come up with it until after the scandal broke. The fact is, Morales tried hard to tell that office his story the summer before, right after his second indictment; this is one of several important reasons to believe that the Justice Department has been disingenuous about why it failed to pursue reports of *contra* drug links.

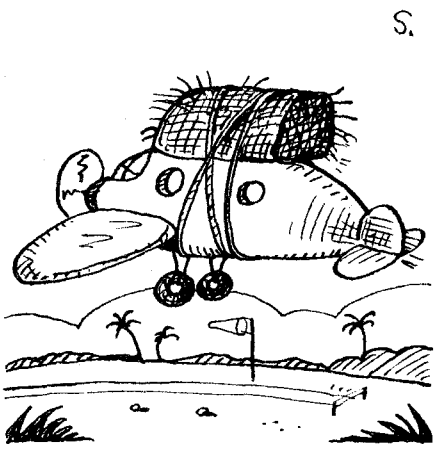
Whatever Morales told Leslie, he told me repeatedly that the Central Intelligence Agency, including John Hull personally, had been after him for a year to make a deal for use of Hull's Costa Rican airstrips, and that he always turned the offers down because he already had adequate refueling spots and didn't want to deal with Americans. He agreed in 1984, he said, because of a promise to get him off from his March 1984 indictment.

Not only did Morales and the others make no bones about the fact that they hoped their stories would get them lighter sentences, Morales, on my third visit with him, said he couldn't talk to me because a Congressional committee had told him not to talk to the press, and the committee could help reduce his sentence but I could not.

Octaviano Cesar was never asked on the *West 57th* program about who had initiated the contact with Morales, or whether Cesar's signature on the U.S. customs form was genuine, or how he explained it. When I relayed questions about Morales to him through aides, he refused to meet me. As for the $400,000, on reflection, I could have tried to verify the signature, which, if accurate, certainly would have been worth including as an example either of probable drug money going to an important *contra* figure or of *contra* money being flown about with a prominent drug dealer.

Still, there has been no evidence provided of where the money came from, or that it was used in the *contra* military cause. And another signature Morales cited that was used by other reporters—not by *West 57th*—appears to be a forgery. (It is the name of former *contra* leader Adolfo Chamorro, signed on a bill of sale for a Cesna 404. At Chamorro's request, I examined his signatures on checks and credit card slips over several years, and they support his word that the 1985 bill of sale is forged. The significance of this is to raise the question of whether Morales, a convicted felon, didn't steal back the Cessna 404 he gave the *contras*, while wanting it to appear that the *contras* got the money; the plane later re-emerged in the name of a Morales associate.)

As Marta Healey pointed out, all charges against her husband, Richard Healey, were filed later for acts committed before she married him. She has never been accused of wrongdoing. Even so, I clearly stated that Marta Healey wasn't the sole source for doubting Morales's story of how the deal with the *contras* was made. The *contra* leaders I named also say the approach was by Morales. Cesar, in the CBS broadcast interview, wasn't asked. And, most important, documents on the sale and maintenance of the two aircraft Morales says he supplied the *contras* support Healey's story that the meetings didn't happen until August or September. One aircraft wasn't delivered until October 23, and the other also didn't appear in the refueling receipts until October. Morales has said the meetings took place in late spring or early summer and that drug flights with the planes occurred in July.



CBS wasn't the only major news organization to quote Betzner and Morales uncritically, nor did I say it was. If the reporters really believed Betzner's word, I wonder why they did not report his other accusations, including the alleged drug activities of a prominent American not involved in the *contra* war, which certainly would be big news if true.

I agreed with *Nation* editors that details of the airstrip measurements could be left out of a story they said was already two and a half times the normal length. But since I am accused of covering up, I now proceed with a few details, even at the risk of bumping some poor author's book review from these pages (I hope not my own). And I'm glad for the acknowledgement that the airstrips were grass, which requires greater takeoff length. On *West 57th*, as Morales and Betzner told of flights to Hull's ranch, an airplane was shown landing on a paved runway; the grass strips were only flashed on the screen later.

The two airstrips—as shown on a map on *West 57th*, as pointed out on maps to me by the prisoners and as located by air and ground—are only about thirty to forty-five minutes' drive apart. The Hull ranch's main strip, by Hull's house, is shown on the aviation map at 3,300 feet. Betzner said it was really about 4,000 feet. Hull said it was only 1,900 feet—which indeed is the length of the flat, well-tended strip he uses for his single-engine plane. But I backed my car all the way up the bumpy rise on one end of the strip to the storage building there, to create the maximum possible running distance. I measured to the fence at the other end of the strip, which abuts not grass but an embankment and a river lined mostly with trees. The photographer accompanying me took ground and aerial photos. The runway length was about 2,955 feet.

I measured with a Hertz rental car. Its odometer checked accurately against roadside sign distances between cities (and since Hertz was paid by the kilometer, it would not likely have allowed much undermeasurement). The odometer rolled continuously by tenths of kilometers, and I turned and measured each strip twice, dividing by two, to improve the accuracy. This should have brought me within 50 feet of precision, and since the measurements so exactly matched Hull's forecasts and were so far from Betzner's, the point seemed made.

**Weighing the Evidence**

There is no single Federal Aviation Administration-certified figure for an airplane's takeoff run. The required run increases significantly with the temperature, ground altitude and, most of all, weight. At 86 degrees (the lower and higher published figures are for 68 and 104 degrees) and at sea level (Hull's ranch is at a few hundred feet elevation, so add a little length), Cessna lists a gross weight takeoff roll of 2,030 feet to lift off and 2,720 feet to clear a fifty-foot obstacle, the practical standard for being ready to leave a runway. For safe operation, these figures are normally increased. Two senior Cessna officials (William Hogan, prop-jet marketing specialist, and David Lipsky, U.S. manager) came up with figures of 2,455 feet for liftoff and 3,515 feet to clear obstacles, at a hypothetical 95 degrees (the alleged runs were made in midday sun in July).

Morales and Betzner are clear, though, that their alleged takeoff was not at the maximum F.A.A.-certified weight of 8,400 pounds. They assert Betzner carried 500 kilograms of cocaine and an extra fuel bladder to reach the United States nonstop. With two pilots, their gross takeoff weight was 9,680 pounds (a figure Betzner conceded was accurate). No tests are run at these configurations, and Cessna is forbidden by law from discussing any such takeoff as safe. Practically everyone in aviation, however, knows that drug smugglers regularly take off at such weights—with enough runway.

To show the degree to which added weight disproportionately increases runway requirements, the runway needed (86 degrees,

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sea level) for the Cessna 404 at 6,300 pounds is 1,300 feet. With an extra 700 pounds, at 7,000 pounds total, the length jumps about 400 feet, to 1,680. With yet another 700 pounds, at 7,700 pounds, the length figure jumps about 500 feet, to 2,140. The next 700 pounds, to the maximum certified 8,400-pound takeoff weight, raises the length requirement about 600 feet, to 2,720. Betzner and Morales added another 1,280 pounds to that. Although again there are no certified figures for such an illegal configuration, the added runway requirement would, experts say, jump proportionately, adding 1,400 or 1,500 feet.

Now consider that all these figures are for paved runways. Grass adds 10 to 15 percent to every length figure given. We are now over 4,500 feet without any margin for error.

I talked to experts from Cessna, Teledyne Continental (the engine maker), some competing companies and the U.S. government. They had no idea my hypothetical case was really Gary Betzner's, even if that would have meant anything to them. They all greeted the notion of such a takeoff in under 3,000 feet with laughter and sarcastic remarks, and said it couldn't be done.

**Fear of Flying**

When I confronted Betzner with this (Morales had stopped talking to me by then), he said he and Morales had souped up the engines in various ways to make the takeoff possible. Dennis Martin, whose company maintained the plane and later acquired it, said the engines hadn't been modified much. Still, most of my experts said that even with the modifications, such a takeoff was impossible. Some said the plane might make it "in a life or death situation" (as one put it), but they wouldn't want to try it. Given that the *contra* leaders told vivid stories about Hull's conservatism in the use of that strip (which is alongside his house)—and especially given that the Cessna wasn't in Morales's possession until more than three months after he and Betzner say the trip was made—I think the strong weight of evidence is against the trip. I will supply names and quotes of the people I called, if necessary.

Yes, Betzner said the Hull ranch runway—4,000 feet, he said—was too short. So he insisted on a different strip for his next trip, which he made with a Panther Navajo, like the Cessna a twin-engine aircraft. He said that strip, which he pointed out clearly on maps both to CBS and for me, was 8,000 feet. Morales remembered it as at least 5,000 or 6,000 feet. I measured it and it was even shorter than the one by Hull's house—about 2,770 feet. The plane's condition of overload and the results of consultations with the experts were much the same as for the Cessna.

Morales and Betzner were very specific that the Cessna Titan Betzner allegedly flew on a drug run in July 1984 was the same one Morales donated to the *contra* front-company Cultivos Experimentales, which is tail number N5273J. Not only do my own interview notes show this at several points, but it is equally clear on the transcript of Morales's interviews with Channel 10 in Miami, which, as far as I know, was the first news outlet to bring the Morales story to public light. After I returned from Central America and challenged Betzner, he wrote me a letter hinting that it could be a different Cessna. But his change in story only casts more doubt on him. *Contra* leaders say the Cessna 404 did bring arms and personnel to the 3,000-foot airstrip at Monico, a remote Hull-owned property near the Nicaraguan border and far from his house. The trick is not landing with a loaded Cessna 404 but taking off with an overloaded one. Raphael Espinosa, a former *contra* airdrop specialist, says he thinks certain colleagues did sneak some cocaine out of Monico, though he says he never saw it. I would bet it happened, but no one to my knowledge has alleged a large shipment from there.

Regarding Michael Tolliver, we are still left with his word, the Vortex connection—which I mentioned—notwithstanding. Although I don't like to use anonymous sources, I'll note that a highly regarded Federal investigator with subpoena power, who is sympathetic with trying to prove a *contra* drug link, found such gaping holes in Tolliver's story that he rejected it.

Ramon Milian-Rodriguez is another convicted drug smuggler with every reason to lie and no corroboration for his story. The idea that so much as $10 million could have passed unnoticed to the *contras* is doubtful.

My book *The Crimes of Patriots* cites at length the *contra* war activities of Clines and Secord, as noted by both of them in their recent threats to sue me.

When Daniel Sheehan filed the Christic Institute lawsuit in May 1986, anyone who kept up with the major newspapers and networks was informed of the secret *contra* arms network and the major players in it (which is not to excuse the way the news organizations allowed their daily coverage to ignore the content of their occasional exposés).

Sheehan, for legal reasons, has to confine his suit to private individuals rather than government officials. As a journalist, I believe that for him or anyone to deny that the U.S. government is responsible for the recent actions of Secord, Theodore Shackley, Clines, Albert Hakim, Quintero, Singlaub or Hull is an affront to the facts. That is why I included the phrase about the "'private' *contra* arms network." If President Reagan hadn't wanted it, it wouldn't have happened.

I feel amused and helpless at Sheehan's assertion that I am "wrong" about his promises to supply witnesses, and his later refusal to do so, in the *contra* aid and Silkwood cases. *Nation* editors told me their fact checkers had gone over the Silkwood matter with Sheehan's office and had verified it. Sheehan himself, in a telephone conversation the day before the article went to press, reasserted to me that he still knew witnesses to Silkwood's finding evidence of smuggled bomb-grade material, but couldn't reveal them, even today, because of the danger. He said nothing about Peter Stockton. John Emshwiller, former chief energy reporter for *The Wall Street Journal*, lived through the Silkwood episode with me, and I consulted him before I wrote. Stockton has been abroad and out of reach, but nothing he said at the time—or has done since—supports Sheehan's contention. I can't believe Stockton had such information and didn't act. All our unsuccessful efforts to get the government's NUMEC files back, then, make Sheehan's suggestion that I do so ludicrous.

Sheehan's perseverance with the Silkwood case when it was a lonely cause, like his similar role with the *contra* arms network, served a commendable public purpose. But it doesn't justify inaccuracy or distortion. The jury that awarded the Silkwood estate the big verdict might not remember Sheehan. The lawyer they would remember is Jerry Spence, one of the best-known (and probably best) trial lawyers in America, who tried the case.

**Waiting for Perot**

Only a few months ago, I spent an afternoon in Sheehan's living room waiting for a call from Texas billionaire Ross Perot, which would, I was told, allow Sheehan to hand me some sources for his allegations about drug smuggling by the *contra* supply people. Perot called and we went through the usual routine of Sheehan plugging and unplugging phone cords in a ritual he says thwarts the National Security Agency. Finally he said he would give me the names the following Monday, after a meeting Perot had arranged for Sheehan with William Webster, then head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Come Monday, of course, the Christic Institute said Sheehan was out of pocket. Perot later told me that he had not arranged a meeting with Webster for Sheehan. But this is an old story. The day *The Nation* sent me Sheehan's letter to respond to, I got a call from the newest Christic Institute staff member, David MacMichael, a former C.I.A. analyst who did the country a notable service several years ago by going public with his perceptive reports on Central America. He said he had been hired to try to cleanse Sheehan's court filings of many factual errors—not the first time I'd heard that, either.

Sheehan, who has ignored the errors in his filings pointed out by others, argues that if 80 percent of his allegations are correct he'll be satisfied. I really believe his zeal is genuine, and that he doesn't realize that 80 percent accuracy in character assassination is not commendable. And so far, that is a very optimistic estimate of his score.

I didn't say that matters he couldn't prove were false. I said he "may yet prove a case." But until he provides evidence, he is entitled to no more credibility than President Reagan, who has spread unfounded drug charges about the Sandinista leadership.

I regret having to remind readers that the focus of my article was not Sheehan or any journalist, but drug involvement in Ronald Reagan's *contra* war. *Jonathan Kwitny*

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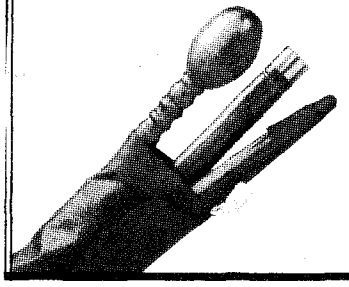

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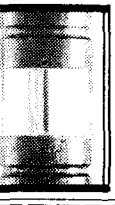

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# BOOKS & THE ARTS.

## Hip and Square

STUART KLAWANS

DOWN AND IN: Life in the Underground. *By Ronald Sukenick. Beech Tree Books/William Morrow. 288 pp. $17.95.*

AQUARIUS REVISITED: Seven Who Created the Sixties Counterculture That Changed America. *By Peter O. Whitmer, with Bruce Van Wyngarden. Macmillan. 260 pp. $19.95.*

The universe at times exhibits strange pockets of symmetry. The subject before us, "counterculture," is the most amorphous possible; the two books that treat it are opposites as orderly as electron and positron. One is East Coast in orientation; the other, West Coast. One is the work of a forty-year veteran of the underground; the other is by a yuppie parvenu. The first imagines American alternative culture as a succession of bars in Manhattan. The second purports to explain the 1960s through the biographies of seven white men, not one of whom plays a musical instrument. *Down and In* by Ronald Sukenick is a lovely book, deserving of thoughtful consideration, which it will receive in some measure beginning in the next paragraph. *Aquarius Revisited* will be found in the oubliette at the bottom of this review.

Sukenick's guided pub crawl begins in 1948, when he was fresh out of Brooklyn's Midwood High School. In search of real life, he joined his sister Gloria at the San Remo, Greenwich Village's hippest bar. Bar? "An actual Village-Bohemian-literary-artistic-underground-mafioso-pinko-revolutionary-subversive-intellectual-existentialist-anti-bourgeois café." Yes, they really did exist—bars where you could run into John Cage, Miles Davis, Merce Cunningham, Jackson Pollock, Julian Beck and Judith Malina, Dorothy Day, Allen Ginsberg, Gregory Corso and the sainted Jack Kerouac himself. Later, the scene shifted to the Cedar Tavern. "All of us hung out at the old Cedar Tavern," Amiri Baraka is quoted as saying, especially the Abstract Expressionists, the New York School poets and the Black Mountain crowd. The White Horse Tavern was more for Dylan Thomas's hangers-on and a group of young novelists—Norman Mailer, William Styron, Vance Bourjaily—"that actually held literary meetings there." At the Five Spot, the hippest writers and artists came to hear the hippest jazz musicians—Charlie Mingus, Thelonius Monk, Sonny Rollins, Cecil Taylor, Ornette Coleman.

Into the 1960s, the scene moved to the East Village and Stanley's on Avenue B. Stanley's was such a dive that when characters like Ed Sanders and Tuli Kupferberg started hanging there, the bedazzled owner thought he was stepping into the middle class. And then came Max's Kansas City, "where the transition took place from artist as outsider to artist as insider, from Jackson Pollock to Andy Warhol." Suddenly the uptown, high-fashion crowd and the downtown bohemians were brought together. In Max's you could find "street person Tommy O'Donnell sitting down to talk about the Brooklyn Dodgers with Cary Grant, or Sargent Shriver coming in late one night with Germaine Greer and getting introduced to a bunch of drag queens." Your waitress was likely to be Deborah Harry, and the sexual ambience "was like Wilhelm Reich a-go-go."

Gone, all gone, including the owner of Max's, Mickey Ruskin, who died of a drug overdose in 1983. The final chapter of *Down and In* records the period of the Mudd Club and the punks (who receive Sukenick's blessing) and their opposite numbers, "the new Hipoisie going south of the Village to SoHo and Tribeca." To a mind less clear than Sukenick's, this final phase might be occasion for mourning or, worse, nostalgia. How can one resist nostalgia, when even the put-downs of the Beats were written by Mary McCarthy and published—would anyone under thirty believe it?—in the *New York Post*? Sukenick knows those were glorious days; his book is, among other things, an oral history full of wonderful stories, wonderfully told. But Sukenick also knows about the violence of underground life, the passivity and self-destruction and self-delusion and waste. "Yeah," his sister Gloria comments, "Iris Brody jumped off the roof, Sonya OD'd, Marilyn also jumped off the roof."

Thus, like any truly satisfying pub crawl, *Down and In* combines autobiography with the confidences of friends, high times with 4:00 A.M. despair. The final ingredient, of course, is an argument, which should flare up periodically and be left unsettled when day finally breaks. *Down and In* has that, too: a debate on the nature of adversary culture, moderated by Sukenick with rare intelligence.

The culture in question grew out of cold war politics and cold-water flats. When Sukenick was young, he couldn't stomach the dominant culture—the piety, the greed, the sexual repression, the smell of the Rosenbergs frying. But he didn't believe the left was an alternative, partly because he was wise to Stalinism and partly because he couldn't abide folk-singing. Old-style bohemianism, with its high European culture and political activism, seemed a false contrary; *real* opposition was a matter of hanging out on Bleecker Street, which was possible because in those days you could get a three-room apartment for $18 a month. "The misunderstood genius starving in the garret was the role model for artists of all kinds at the time," Sukenick writes. "I myself could hardly wait to start going hungry." But with rents so low, bohemians didn't have to go all *that* hungry.

In fact, material and political conditions were so favorable to the formation of an underground that at least two of them arose: On the one side (or so it seemed at the time) stood Allen Ginsberg, with his "angelic and lamby politics." On the other stood Norman Mailer and the White Negro. The choice, Sukenick explains, "was between two different kinds of withdrawal." The beats, with their ideal of underground purity, called for "a revolution of the human heart." The hipsters, with their antisocial acting out, were "intent on numbing out on a hopeless scene." Sukenick himself believed in a "third course" of "hopeful participation. . . . At the time it simply wasn't a realistic option." Now, he believes, it is.

"The truth is that in this country the myth of the genius in the garret, flaunting an impoverished purity, was always a middle-class soap opera. . . . Its unrecognized message is that genuine art deserves rejection—as if it were not bad enough that it is often in fact rejected." Sukenick believes the evolution of the last four decades has resulted in a new underground that is not self-destructive. The young writer Mark Leyner, for example, explains in a conversation with Sukenick that he doesn't really reject

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money and fame—he just doesn't expect to get them, so long as he goes on writing things like *My Cousin, My Gastroenterologist*. Since he doesn't plan to change his writing, he's come to the level-headed decision that he'll just have to find some other way to support himself, and maybe even find money and fame along the way. How many Irises and Sonyas and Marilyns had to die, before American artists could reach that simple conclusion? "For subterraneans who don't turn out to be closet Yuppies, and of course many do," Sukenick comments, America now offers the possibility of an idea of purity "purified of defeatism and hypocrisy, envy and contempt."

I agree with all my heart and don't believe a word of it. As Sukenick himself admits, it took him years "to desentimentalize the underground, differentiate the interesting from the merely seedy, and begin to acknowledge its darker, unredeemed, infernal aspects." Can that demonism really be purged? At one point, Sukenick seems ambivalent on whether he wants it to be. "It might be argued that tapping the infernal is necessary to release the darker powers of consciousness that energize art," he says. The real problem, apparently, is that "not everyone is an artist and not everyone can handle it."

For Sukenick, then, adversary culture is a culture by and for artists; its violence and self-destructiveness grow uncontrollable only in the presence of the "floaters" who mingle with the underground—the hordes of young people, for example, who flooded into the East Village in the 1960s with no clear idea of why they were there or what they wanted to do. The problem here is the assumption that artists are different from everybody else. No doubt they are, for those few hours of the day when they're actually at work. But artists, Sukenick included, are not portrayed at work in *Down and In*. They're shown drinking, which puts them in a larger New York community that existed through the mid-1970s because it could scrape by without much money. In that context, it was an act of solidarity with the ne'er-do-wells for Pollock to refuse success, an act of imagination for Warhol to play with fame. Whichever side you chose in the dialectic of holy losers and sell-outs, the scufflers' community remained the standard of judgment. No more.

Today, the phony ideal of purity has fallen away, not because of the accumulated wisdom of four decades of bohemia but because of Edward I. Koch. (I speak synecdochally, of course.) On the Lower East Side, an apartment—one room, not three—now rents for more than $600 a month, or close to twice the annual per capita income in Nicaragua. This carefully planned disaster has struck all of the neighborhood's poor, pretty much eliminating any Franciscan ideals the artists might have cherished. Those who still get their artistic highs from squalor seem more and more like floaters themselves. Consider the case of the two self-described artists—their notes were recently published in the Performance Project's magazine *The Act*—who staged an event on the Lower East Side in support of the homeless. After deciding to perform in a rubble-strewn lot, they found they were displacing a homeless man who was living there in an abandoned car—*and they went ahead with their performance anyway*. The artists note that the public—ignorant as always—responded poorly.

My impression is that such acts of solidarity are becoming fortunately rare. In today's circumstances, few people, artists or not, can sustain the necessary level of self-delusion for them. It's true, of course, that the Lower East Side has seen previous struggles for turf. Sukenick documents quite unsparingly the battles that took place in the 1960s between the older community and the new youth culture. But he doesn't offer much explanation for those conflicts, other than to suggest that folk music was to blame. In other words, he sees them as a clash of cultures more than of classes, which may be a fair reading of the 1960s. When he gets to the 1980s, though, Sukenick doesn't even address the immediate, material cause of the breakup of the community. For that, you'd have to go to Yvonne Rainer and her film *The Man Who Envied Women*, which is, among other things, a reaction to the moment when downtown artists realized they were competing for space with impoverished and angry Puerto Ricans, and that both sides would lose.

Now, if you understand why the community broke up, you will have a somewhat different attitude about Sukenick's main point, that the artists' ideal of failure is dead. It's dead because the younger artists (or older ones who didn't grab a rent-controlled apartment) have to hustle in the straight world now, and they can no longer count on the approbation of a low-rent, leisure-time community. Some of the most adversarial


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artists I know have taught themselves word processing and are working the graveyard shift on Wall Street. In order to reach the other word processors who might appreciate their art, they must spend the rest of their time begging for a mention in *The Village Voice*, a weekly newspaper run for the profit of a cat-litter tycoon.

And a good thing, too. The bums have been pushed out of the business. Only the committed remain, such as Sukenick himself, whom I salute for his four decades of accumulated wisdom and disagree with only on matters of cause and effect. His third course of hopeful participation is now the only course since, like it or not, we've all got to participate. The violence of the underground now can be seen as part of the violence and self-destructiveness of American culture as a whole, neither to be praised for its artistic possibilities nor evaded as the work of the Other. The artistic productions of the underground now can be seen simply as artistry, when they're any good; and when they're not, they no longer have the barflies' applause. Best of all, artists and nonartists alike now can express their opposition to American yawp and twaddle *even if they don't live in lower Manhattan*. At last, we may be able to erase the line between hip and square.

And yet there is Peter O. Whitmer. At his very approach, the hairs of hipdom bristle on the true boho's nape. When Ronald Sukenick speaks with Allen Ginsberg, you get to eavesdrop on an exchange between old friends. When Whitmer talks to Ginsberg, the conversation goes like this: "'I do not want to hear about it,' Ginsberg raved. For the first of what was to be many times, he shouted into my unsuspecting ear, '*You don't understand! You don't understand!*'"

Indeed, Whitmer does not. His notion is to explain the development of 1960s counterculture by giving profiles of seven men: Timothy Leary, William Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg, Ken Kesey, Norman Mailer, Hunter S. Thompson and Tom Robbins. It mystifies me that six of the seven should be writers, since Whitmer freely admits he knows nothing of poetry (and therefore of literature). My suspicion is that the choices were heavily influenced by Leary, with whom Whitmer, a clinical psychologist by trade, is now associated. Whitmer is in fact identified by his publisher as the "official biographer" of Timothy Leary. What this means I cannot say. "Official biographer" used to be a synonym for ass-licker, but the robust import of the term no doubt has withered, now that Frito-Lay chips are the official snack food of the New York Yankees. Most likely it means that the book's direction, and a number of its opinions, come from Leary. Whitmer himself betrays no sign of having thought about the subject. He claims to have devoted years of study to the counterculture, in the course of which he discovered that "yes, by God, there *was* a plot; a logical and orderly progression connected it all." But he doesn't actually develop a plot, or any thesis whatever, other than the obvious one that these seven men have met in various combinations. Let one example stand for many: "A decade before James Dean began acting out the message and the rules of a new generation on the screen, Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs, and Norman Mailer had begun laying the foundation in their writing." Sukenick may at times be diffident about cause and effect, but Whitmer seems never to have heard of the stuff.

Conscience compels me to add that Whitmer provides three side trips in the book: to Esalen; the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh community; and the Berkeley campus, where, as an undergraduate during the days of the Free Speech Movement, he heckled Allen Ginsberg.

Is this man square? Listen to this: "Ginsberg's lyrics pick at society's shortcomings—the mistakes, the childishness, the foolishness, the lies. If the audience is expecting a hint of a solution, none is offered." That Ginsberg, what a nabob of negativity. And this: "If we are to believe Ginsberg, Central America is destined to be the Vietnam of the 1980s." Carpet bombing, Whitmer! Mining of harbors! Massacres and C.I.A. intrigue! You're waiting for *more*?

Forget this guy. Read Sukenick—not just *Down and In* but his novels, too. Read Ginsberg's prophetic and immortal "Death to Van Gogh's Ear!"; if you have time, go back as I did to William Gaddis's *The Recognitions* and read the scariest scenes of New York bohemia ever written. And if you're looking for a list of seven who made the 1960s, try this: Martin Luther King, John Coltrane, Betty Friedan, Rachel Carson, Jean-Luc Godard, Aretha Franklin and Muhammad Ali. I invite further nominations. ☐

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# The Other Europeans

IVAN SANDERS

Touchy East Europeans regularly argue that the reason their literature is not better known in the West has less to do with cultural and linguistic barriers than with the simple fact that the countries of their region don't much matter to the West and never have. Hungarians are especially prone to this kind of defensive rationalization. Fiercely proud of their cultural heritage, they are also dubious about the international appeal of their literary treasures, and endlessly agonize over what constitutes world-class literature. Their uncertainty also stems from the belief that their particular historical experience is of little consequence. For example, the embittered narrator of George Konrád's novel *The Loser* remembers how enlightened Hungarian intellectuals viewed the victorious West after the Second World War: "For us . . . the West meant Munich, the belated European landing, the unnecessary bombing raids. Their motto was: Democracy at home and dictatorship in the backwaters. And we were backwaters, all right." In another remarkable Hungarian novel, György Spiró's *The X's*, which is about nineteenth-century Polish theater people, a character exclaims in desperation: "How does one depict historical conflicts in a country where world history is not made?"

East European fiction does sometimes strike Western readers as provincial, if only because its writers are so often preoccupied with their own country's place in the sun. Thus, while a thoroughgoing European like Konrád has made a name for himself outside his native country, other highly gifted contemporary Hungarian novelists remain virtually unknown abroad, prompting Hungarian cynics to conclude that the Western literary consciousness can absorb only one representative of a "minor" literature at a time. It is tempting to argue that our selective interest is also politically motivated. We are attracted to writers who violate norms and rattle establishments—who affirm their unorthodoxy through loud and predictable dissent.

Is the Western reader's response, then, still conditioned by tired stereotypes? Is the real Eastern Europe even now a remote place? Actually, more literary works from the "other Europe" have appeared in English translation in the last fifteen to twenty years than had in the previous thirty. What is more, a number of prominent American novelists have been, in recent years, so intrigued by various East European capitals, as well as by the history and culture of the region, that they were moved to write about them. (For the record: Saul Bellow, William Styron, John Updike and Philip Roth have all introduced East European locales in their fiction. An important figure in Cynthia Ozick's recent novel, *The Messiah of Stockholm*, is the Polish-Jewish writer Bruno Schultz. And Joyce Carol Oates has not only written stories with a contemporary Hungarian setting, she has looked back to turn-of-the-century Budapest to review the work of an early Hungarian modernist largely unknown in the West.)

Recent issues of American journals featuring translations of contemporary Hungarian literature:

*Translation*, Vol. 15, Fall 1985.

*Formations*, Vol. 3, No. 1, Spring 1986.

*The Portable Lower East Side*, Vol. 3, No. 1 & No. 2, Winter/Summer 1986.

*Cross Currents—A Yearbook of Central European Culture*, No. 4 & No. 5, 1985, 1986.

Still, misconceptions abound, and Hungary may be a special case anyway. Known for its openness and vibrancy, Hungarian society is often judged to be frivolous as well, with an urbane but lightweight culture to match. Such simplifications, especially if they discourage a serious response to a culture, can be harmful, but the truth of the matter is that much Hungarian literature does have a certain flair, a lightness of touch, even at its most serious. It is a literature that lacks a brooding, philosophical tradition. Romantic ardor, patriotic bluster, sentimentality have never been alien to the national character, and perhaps for this reason some of Hungary's best modern writers are ironists, parodists. It is their spirit that may have seeped into foreign notions of what is "Hungarian."

Prose fiction came of age rather late in Hungary. Though a number of its twentieth-century innovators rank with the best European modernists, it's only in the last twenty years or so that fiction has supplanted poetry as the predominant genre. What in retrospect can be termed the first phase of an important postmodern movement began in the 1960s. The innovative fiction of this period eschewed traditional, anecdotal realism in favor of more abstract forms—parables, allegories—and writers worked toward simplifying, crystallizing language, often resorting to grotesque distortions to achieve greater clarity. The works they produced seemed daring at the time, though they reflected pretty accurately the mood of those years. The failed revolution of 1956 was still a recent memory, political matters could not be openly discussed and explicit stories about defeat, oppression, betrayal were out of the question; suggestive allegories were, however, tolerated by an increasingly liberal regime. And sophisticated Hungarian readers, long adept at reading between lines and filling in gaps, took eagerly to these fables and bare-boned "models," registering hidden meanings with secret satisfaction.

One of the writers who came into his own in the 1960s was István Örkény—his deadpan "one-minute stories" began a trend toward literary minimalism in Hungarian prose. Örkény's radically abbreviated verbal snapshots, many of them no more than a few lines, not only mock the confident assumptions of conventional fiction, they also zero in, casually but with deadly aim, on the absurdities of East European existence. One of his celebrated miniatures, "Classified Ad," sums up neatly the wistfulness—and hopelessness—of the post-56 era:

> Must exchange as soon as possible (will pay extra cash if necessary) my 5th floor, 3½-room flat, complete with built-in kitchen cabinets, on Joliot-Curie Square, overlooking Mount Eagle, for a 5th floor, 3½-room flat with built-in kitchen cabinets, on Joliot-Curie Square, overlooking Mount Eagle.

Exciting and courageous as it first seemed, the parabolic fiction of the 1960s began to show its age by the 1970s. Not only did more relaxed conditions render stark political allegories a little passé but a new generation of prose writers emerged who were far less austere and disciplined

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than their elders. One place, however, where Hungarian writers continue to be drawn to darkly symbolic forms is Transylvania, and with good reason. The scene of ghoulish romps in the popular imagination, Transylvania is a grimly real region of present-day Rumania where roughly 2 million ethnic Hungarians live, all of them painfully aware of being a minority in a state where the majority is also oppressed. In their literature, mastery of language is often coupled with an inward-turning, claustrophobic vision that seems to suggest the spiritual effects of this double isolation and repression.

Ádám Bodor is a contemporary Transylvanian Hungarian writer whose stories are hauntingly, disquietingly open-ended. Time and place in them cannot be fixed with any certainty, for the clues—an oblique reference to an event, an artifact, a name—are tantalizingly few and at times not even they offer much guidance. Yet, the unnamed menace lurking in them is invariably political in nature; the sense of foreboding is prompted by the subtle treacheries of a police state. One of his latest, and eeriest, stories, "The Outpost," is about a woman, a party faithful, who is abruptly transferred to a remote district. She dutifully embarks on the long journey, but the closer she gets to her destination, the clearer it becomes that she is on her way to a prison camp. At the end she is left to wonder if she is there as an overseer or an inmate. It's worth noting that a crucial detail identifying locale in the story (a wry reference to a propaganda slogan extolling "the hard-working, talented Rumanian people") appears in a recent English version of "The Outpost" put out by *The New Hungarian Quarterly*, an English-language journal published in Budapest, but was excised from the original Hungarian edition. The omission was presumably politically motivated. The Hungarian authorities, though clearly vexed by the aggressive chauvinism and restrictive cultural policies of the Nicolae Ceausescu regime, have not had the courage so far to condemn it unequivocally. They have, however, welcomed Hungarian émigrés or "resettlers" from Rumania. Bodor's latest collection of stories was published in Hungary and he moved to Budapest himself several years ago.

In Bodor's new home city, such terse, Kafkaesque narratives are no longer in vogue, and for all we know that may be a good thing. The Hungarian postmodernists of the 1980s are an expansive, self-absorbed and verbose lot. In their exuberant and showy fiction they personalize recent history, yet try hard to retain their cool. Three newly published Hungarian novels are, in an important sense, fictionalized autobiographies, in which the authors' view of their own past as well as the Hungarian past is in-

## KRAZY KAT'S CONFESSION

*In the interior of Sumatra the rice is sown by women who, in sowing, let their hair hang loose down their back, in order that the rice may grow luxuriantly and have long stalks.*
—Frazer, *The Golden Bough*

In the interior of Manhattan
your oats were sown with women
who, in sowing, let their hair
spread luxuriantly on soft pillows.

St. Augustine knew that the one thing
we don't need is another definition of beauty.
But you were always full of ideas
in those days, watching the big moon burn.

Riding the merry-go-round one night,
a woman twice married, twice widowed,
asked how you would define your own death:
what words would you avoid,

and what kind of baggage
would you pack for Hell?
Cleverly you replied that you
would rather go to Paradise naked.

Where are those girls who fifteen—
even twenty!—years ago opened
their arms to you on snowy nights
and put the fever into your veins?

You've never been one to keep tabs
on your ghosts: the future housewives,
poets, lawyers, and doctors of medicine
who tutored you in the tropical pursuits.

Is it so easy to spirit people away
like so many stations in the night?
Maybe not for everyone.
One of those would-be physicians

loved to tryst in the kitchen,
on a butcher-block table,
while her mother (a shrink)
read the evening paper in the next room.

You can still see clearly the odd
details of her face: a green cloud
hovering in the left iris, a question-mark
scar by the ear, and violet lips

mouthing the songs on the radio,
whispering your name faster and faster
under the Tiffany lamp
while the dog watched from the corner.

During his conversion, his back to the light,
Augustine claimed his eyes,
by which he saw all things illuminated,
were themselves in darkness.

That would be one prerequisite
toward a definition of beauty:
one has to be in the dark
before he can see the light.

Back then all formulas
were that deceptively simple:
you encountered pleasure on its own terms;
and while snow spun into the city,

your partners already understood
what you only now begin to grasp,
what the girls on more fertile islands
know from birth: beauty defines itself

through ritual, bridging the chasms,
stopping short of words, always.

*Nicholas Christopher*

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evitably conditioned by their origins. One of the authors (Péter Esterházy) is the son of déclassé aristocrats; another (Péter Nádas) had a father who was a high-ranking Communist functionary; and the third (Miklós Vámos) comes from a solid middle-class background, though he went through a radical phase in the 1960s. The three novels are very different, but in its own way each attests to the extraordinary vitality of contemporary Hungarian fiction, and therefore deserves a closer look.

Esterházy, born in 1950, grew up as a class enemy. In the 1950s, the remaining members of the Hungarian branch of the famed aristocratic family were stripped of their property, ordered out of the capital and otherwise stigmatized. But by the time Esterházy appeared on the literary scene in the mid-1970s, his name was no longer a liability. (A few years later a younger brother became a well-known soccer player.) Today many in Budapest find it deliciously ironic that socialist Hungary can boast of not one but two famous Esterházys. The writer, too, savors the irony, though his response to it is complex and equivocal.

Esterházy's latest book, *Introduction to Literature* (1986), is a vast compendium of texts, in turn dazzling and infuriating, full of stylistic excesses and typographical quirks. There is a disclaimer at the end of the book: a grotesquely long list of writers, in alphabetical order, from Adorno to Zhdanov, and featuring literally hundreds of Hungarian authors of every conceivable stripe, dead and alive, whose words, we are told, are quoted or distorted in the body of the work. What Esterházy is obsessed with is literary memory, and the always fragile, pliable language of memory. His digressive and allusive prose spoofs literary culture, but in a country where this culture pretty much mirrors local history—a history the author's own family had a hand in making. In sarcastically alluding to national disasters, or in mimicking and parodying nationalist rhetoric, Esterházy is very much aware of the ambiguousness of his own position; because of his name and background he is both upholder of a tradition and a jeering subverter of it. His most recent short fiction, entitled coyly *The Helping Verbs of the Heart* and included in *Introduction to Literature*, is once again a mélange of styles and voices, though the predominant mood is elegiac. In this, the least fragmented of his texts, Esterházy recounts the death and burial of his mother. Part reverie, part mock prayer, the narrative also has moments of genuine pathos, as in this passage:

> Who is lying there, that thing, that form, that gray dot in a dark hole? She looks so familiar, so familial . . .
>
> "Can you hear me Mamma, dearest Mamma, Beatrice, Beatrice Elena, Beatrice Elena Viterbo, my darling Beatrice, my very own, forever lost to me, it's me, I am here . . ."
>
> The cells are taking off, I can see they are. . . . Can see it on the motionless eyes, all around the long, dark hollows and creases of the face, on the elongated forehead, on the nose that juts out now, like an odd attachment, an afterthought; and on the swollen belly, and on the hair, though not because it's grey but because it's so unexpectedly straight—it, too, is bereft of life; drenched and matted, it hangs into that dull, lumpy surface called *cheek* by "the always bored, always sad autopsist."
>
> Ah, but her feet, her feet are still warm!

There are those in Hungary who feel that this new fiction, especially Esterházy's, has become so impenetrably private and elusive, so very self-indulgent, that for all its technical razzle-dazzle it's devoid of real interest, a marginal curiosity. There is no question that an air of exclusivity hangs over these works; their snob appeal is considerable, though it's also true that the points of departure are still the all-too-familiar historical traumas of the recent past, so in that sense at least they are never esoteric. What is more, their flippant culture criticism always entails popular linguistic criticism—behind the madcap parodies and pastiches there is the recognition that in a society where all public discourse is warped, language itself is hopelessly compromised. These inventive postmodernists fight back by raising vacuous small talk, political double-talk, the "Hungarian periphrastic," as British commentator Timothy Garton Ash put it, to an art.

Nádas's *Book of Memoirs*, also published last year, is a far more unified work of fiction than any of Esterházy's writings, but his language is a similarly stylized and allusive literary one. Here the narrative alternates between the memoirs of a sensitive artist and the delicately wrought recollections of a character of his creation, and concludes with the more down-to-earth notes of the narrator's childhood friend. Nádas's in-

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genious narrative devices and superrefined prose bring to mind specific literary models: not infrequently the syntactic intricacies and subtle tonalities of Mann and Proust. But like so much introspective literature, the novel is basically a quest for identity, a search for the essential self, an attempt to come to terms with still threatening fathers. Nádas is not the only writer of his generation whose Communist parents joined the mass delirium of the Stalinist 1950s only to become tools of a despotic system. Most of these dedicated hardliners had tragic lives; first repudiated by their more liberal confreres, they were later rejected by their own disillusioned children. Nádas and his hero lived through the 1950s as impressionable youngsters who for a time were themselves enthralled by the trappings of totalitarian power. As self-styled guardians of ideological and moral purity, they kept a wary eye over their superorthodox parents. Nádas's narrator recalls the time he broke open his father's desk and on the evidence of old love letters decided to denounce him. As an adult he is tormented by guilt and can't make up his mind what was more despicable: his righteous zeal or his subsequent cynicism.

The awful 1950s have been exposed again and again in Hungarian literature and film; it would seem there is nothing more to uncover. The third novelist, Vámos, has indeed moved on, and his new book, *Half-Song*, is a glib and ironic evocation of the late 1960s, a time of relative prosperity and cautious experimentation in Hungary. Interestingly, Vámos concentrates on the radical youth culture of the period; his main characters are members of a 1960s rock band who sang politically correct "protest" songs in gymnasiums and social halls, in imitation of their Western counterparts. (Vámos himself, at the time, was the lead guitarist and lyricist of a group called the Guerrillas.) For the most part children of urban professionals, these young rebels created a rather tame, state-sanctioned counterculture; their nonconformist ways were a source of amusement rather than concern. Vámos knows all this and recalls the naïve radicalism of his youth with just the right blend of nostalgia, empathy and irony. What he really wants to learn is what became of the ultraleftists and anarchists and muddle-headed intellectuals of the 1960s. The answer is rather predictable: in the pragmatic Hungary of the 1980s, they are unabashed go-getters or resigned cynics, or have moved into a different kind of opposition. The author saves his sharpest barbs for one particular former friend, a Maoist turned dissident, who nowadays does his shopping in Budapest's hard currency emporiums and is careful to nurture his valuable Western contacts. The radical ex-songwriter Vámos, who has become a successful, prolific and somewhat facile novelist and playwright, evidently has his own reasons to poke fun at well-known dissidents, but he does focus on the dilemmas faced by those members of the unofficial culture who consider themselves serious artists.

It's no secret that the dangers inherent in conforming to an image may be felt by loyalists and dissidents alike. It so happens that the most renowned member of Hungary's "alternative" culture, George Konrád, has also completed a novel recently, which, like the previously discussed works, is openly autobiographical, evoking most delicately and poignantly a prewar childhood spent in a small town in eastern Hungary. Yet, in recent years, there seems to have been a greater interest—at least in the West—in Konrád's hard-hitting though predictable political essays than in his novels, and the author has been obliging his readers a little too readily, churning out one formulaic essay after another on artistic freedom and the perils of statism, at times at the expense of his far more penetrating and subtle fiction. Now it's true that these essays and polemics have a different ring when read in *samizdat* at home, where the author's conscious abandonment of self-censorship can be better appreciated. But as a fellow East European writer, the Yugoslav Danilo Kis, warned (at an unofficial literary symposium in Budapest in 1985): "The censored 'I,' which has long suffered the oppression of fear, seizes on the pamphlet as an avenging sword. . . . Victims of self-censorship suddenly cross the line separating art from propaganda."

In a way all writers sensitive to political realities (and who in Eastern Europe isn't?) are faced with this problem. If their criticism is too oblique and artful, if they indulge in too many private symbols, too much arcana, they can fade into irrelevance; but if in an attempt to be totally honest they fall back on clichés, they have abdicated their responsibility as artists. Recent Hungarian fiction demonstrates that literary sophistication and indirection can indeed go hand in hand with political acuity and candor. Younger novelists like Esterházy and Nádas may be obsessed with the same old "historical givens," the same local realities, but their inventiveness and audacity as writers render these givens ever more intriguing, even to outsiders. □

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# THEATER.

## THOMAS M. DISCH

### Holy Ghosts

Romulus Linney's *Holy Ghosts* deserves to become one of the great standbys of American theater, a play like *Our Town* or *The Glass Menagerie* that every fledgling actor or actress has appeared in at least once, that every regional and summer stock theater can count on to fill the house, that guarantees Oscar nominations for the lucky stars who get to play its leading roles in the movie version. Perhaps it is already bound for such glory. Linney lays claim to "at least fifty and maybe one hundred productions throughout the country in the last fifteen years." Perhaps my astonishment at the play's (and playwright's) merits is a mark of my New York parochialism, for which the proper cure was administered by the American Theater Exchange, which imported the San Diego Repertory Theater's production of *Holy Ghosts* to Manhattan's Theater 890. There for most of the month of August, it was the best-acted, best-directed and best-written play in town.

Its premise could not be more high-concept (i.e., nutshellable): Coleman Shedman, a scrawny rooster of a redneck, has tracked his errant prick-teasing wife, Nancy, to a little church in the wildwood whose minister, Obediah Buckhorn Jr.,

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has persuaded Nancy to put aside the abusive Coleman and marry him. Act One ends with the discovery that Buckhorn's flock are snake handlers, who, taking St. Paul at his word, add to the usual ecstasies of Pentecostal worship the daredevil (or rather, God-challenging) thrill of playing with rattlesnakes and copperheads while praising the Lord. The second act is a series of instructive confrontations between the skeptical Coleman and the church members, as each gives a testimonial for religious brinkmanship, which leads to the inevitable climax when the snakes come out of their boxes. The play concludes with as neat a dramatic reversal as ever poetic justice dictated.

Like prime Ibsen, *Holy Ghosts* is so flawlessly put together that, even though it never violates the conventions of naturalism, its art simply can't be concealed. For those whose taste eschews the grand manner, the large gesture, the bon mot (even delivered with a Tennessee twang), Linney's very excellences may register as excesses. Contemporary, minimalizing taste allows classic drama to have its big moments, since their power to amaze has been diminished by familiarity, but full-throttle opera-scaled dramaturgy by living playwrights tends to get a bad press. For David Mamet, or A.R. Gurney Jr., or August Wilson, discretion is the better part of valor, and understatement the order of the day. Linney harks back to an aesthetic that (like the snake handlers he so much admires) takes larger risks. The effect, when the gamble pays off, is correspondingly larger.

Before *Holy Ghosts*, my acquaintance with Linney's work had been limited to seeing *April Snow* earlier in the summer in a festival of one-act plays at the Ensemble Studio Theatre and to reading *Jesus Tales*, a collection of Linney's own New Testament Apocrypha. Both works are notable for their humane warmth and comic wisdom, and so in its way is *Holy Ghosts*, but the merits of the latter—and my urge to praise Linney in due proportion—were on such a scale that I felt obliged to read other of his plays to be sure that *Holy Ghosts* was not a lucky fluke.

What I read only increased my admiration. *The Sorrows of Frederick*, his first play, written in 1966, is a biography in two acts of Prussia's Frederick the Great. Linney's ambition could scarcely have found a more unlikely target. A celibate, a misanthrope and eventually a monomaniacal mad tyrant, Frederick is not a figure many theatergoers will take to their hearts, however vividly portrayed. Not surprisingly the play has enjoyed its largest successes in Austria and Germany, where Frederick—and the author's literary antecedents in Goethe and Brecht—are more likely to be appreciated.

Linney did not continue in that epic vein. *Love Suicide at Schofield Barracks* (1972) is a traditional courtroom drama that takes place at the same Army outpost in which James Jones's *From Here to Eternity* was set. The year is 1970, and a commission of inquiry has been summoned to investigate the bizarre double suicide of the post's commanding general and his wife, an act that may represent an aborted presidential assassination *or* a misfired child-murder, as well as an American rescension of the love suicide plays of the Japanese puppet-theater playwright Chikamatsu. Even without the benefit that a good performance can bring to bear, *Love Suicide* struck me as the most effective anti-Vietnam play of its unhappy era. It was Linney's big crack at Broadway—where Clive Barnes gave it the kind of definitively damning review that usually happens only in nightmares. After praising the cast and direction in high terms, Barnes wrote, "The play could not . . . ever make a particularly convincing or satisfying evening in the theater." Little wonder that Linney, with such a curse on his head, did not become a noticeable presence on Broadway. What is wonderful is that he did soldier on to write dramas of the same high and unfashionable ambition for Off Broadway and regional theaters.

There, the sermon's over. To return to my proper task as a reviewer, the San Diego Repertory Theater's production was exemplary, as the major reviewers have noticed with (this time) all the superlatives at their disposal. Everyone's contribution to the evening was as good as the play deserved: the arena set by D. Martyn Bookwalter, with its surrounding pathway of real, packed-down dirt; the precise tempos of Douglas Jacobs's direction; and all fifteen performances. One expects the principals in three such juicy roles as Linney provides to register vividly, and so they did. Diana Castle was like a worn-down version of Caroll Baker's Baby Doll, and Ollie Nash handled the role of the larger-than-life Obediah Buckhorn Jr. with the authority of a sumo wrestler. But for star-quality mesmerizing now-you-


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love-him, now-you-hate-him emotional roller-coastering, Bradley Fisher as Shedman gets all my top adjectives.

Of the other dozen members of the company, those who left the most indelible impression were Don R. McManus as a young man driven mad by the murder of his hound and Priscilla Allen as a fat biddy of a choir leader with the spiritual aplomb of a warrior saint. Indeed, what the entire cast managed to convey, as a corporate body, was the uncanny dignity that lights up those who belong to communities of the irrationally heroic: mountain climbers, astronauts, snake handlers.

What finally makes the play so considerable (i.e., memorable for the shape of its ideas) is the way that even as the dramaturgy evokes tears and laughter and suspense, the events onstage make you think about serious matters in a serious way. Left to my own prejudices, I would tend to place Pentecostal snake handlers (and fundamentalists in general) in one of the lower *bolgie* of my own Last Judgment's Inferno. After *Holy Ghosts*, I'm inclined to reclassify them as redneck equivalents of Shakers or Essenes, holy madmen of a higher order. But Linney's dramatic achievement goes beyond unsettling a few middle-class complacencies. Linney has given new and meaningful shape to an issue—the relation between faith and danger—too emotionally elusive for philosophy to handle unassisted by poetry. In short, he's done the job theater was first invented for by the ancient Greeks. □

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**ASSISTANT EDITOR.** International environmental organization seeks assistant editor for bimonthly magazine. Three years experience in feature writing and editing required. Salary $18,000-$20,000. Send resume and clips to: Andre Carothers, Greenpeace, 1611 Connecticut Avenue N.W., Washington, DC 20009. Position available October 1. No phone calls.

**PART TIME.** The Nation is seeking a part-time Office Assistant who is accurate and detail oriented, to handle orders, invoices, checks, filing. 10 to 12 hours per week, flexible schedule. Send resume to: The Nation, Box 268, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011.

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## PUBLICATIONS

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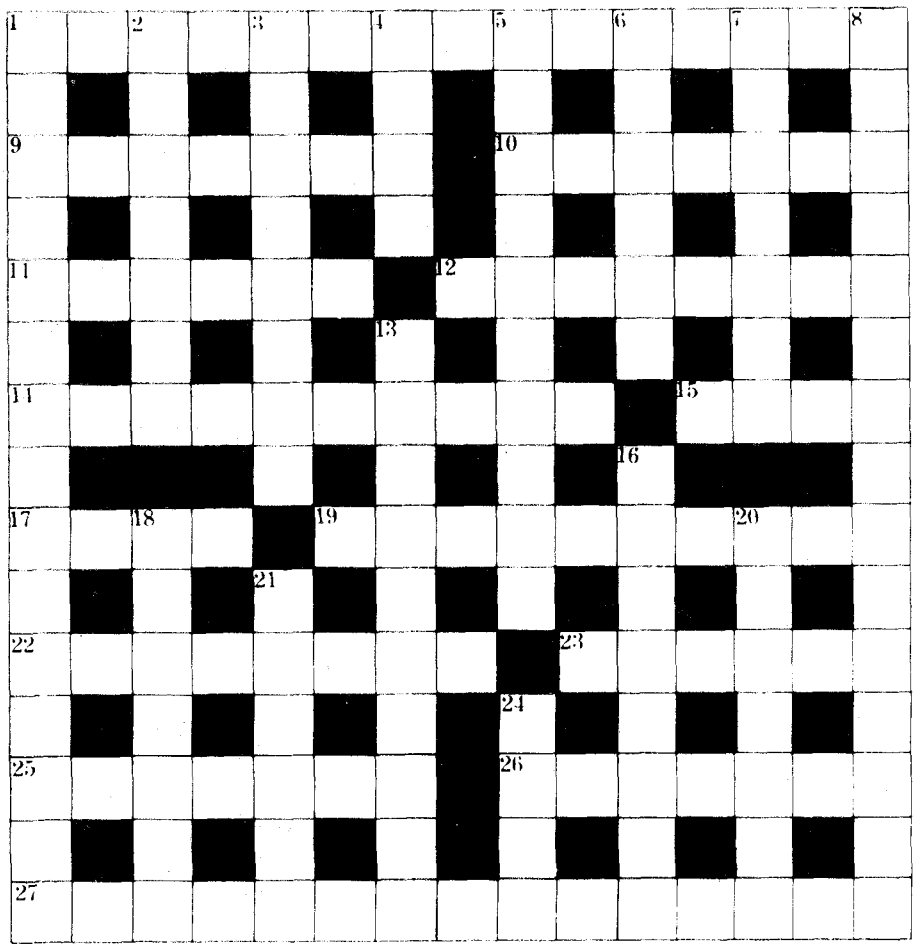
# Crossword Puzzle No. 2164

FRANK W. LEWIS



## ACROSS

1 Located what bridges are for? (Opponents might be found this way.) (2,5,8)
9 Less mad, perhaps, but often in distress, as they say. (7)
10 Having the will to be so? (7)
11 Hit and run—in the plural! (These are the last things one would expect to see listed after them!) (6)
12 and 1 down You've got me in time of war? That's all I've got to give! (4,4,3,6,6)
14 This is where some people draw the line, when figuring things out, as well. (2,8)
15 Quiet little fellow, as one might say. (Makes money, too.) (4)
17 But the ones of Virginia weren't the dregs! (4)
19 The things that carry water to the wizard's companion? (One might throw it to see the light.) (3,6)
22 Not the one which is curled in a sneer. (Sass, as they say, after a French one goes to the German.) (8)
23 When in the red do you have to fight hard? (You get what you deserve!) (6)
25 You really shouldn't complain of it in the bedroom! (7)
26 What did he have on the stage? Three sisters and an uncle by name. (7)
27 Who do we see at the concert place overseas? A player from Kansas City, Prof. Einstein and the author of the Bounty stories! (5,6,4)

## DOWN

1 See 12
2 Another name for whales, as they sound? (If your pronunciation is a little sloppy!) (7)
3 Run roughshod across something? (Off with the old, on with the new, if one does!) (8)
4 Like "Quiet!" around it—it might go over the shoulder. (4)
5 How some stalagmites grow, more or less. (2,2,1,5)
6 Mailer? Bill, more likely. (6)
7 Liners might belong in one, but an eels a stranger in it, perhaps. (7)
8 Scratch the subject of conversation if you do! (Someone usually appears just before this.) (5,2,3,5)
13 Describing the look that is not straight ahead. (10)
16 Most like Ida? (There seems to be a point to a little examination!) (8)
18 Getting along, as they say, somewhat like a minor official of the church? (7)
20 One needs it to breathe with 24, having climbing skill being required around it. (7)
21 Descriptive of the veil that sounds more like a restraint? (6)
24 A revolutionary figure might give some people a pain! (4)

SEE LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION AT LEFT

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*–Mrs. James S. Brady–*

# *"Help me fight the National Rifle Association."*

"Six years ago, John Hinckley pulled a $29 revolver from his pocket and opened fire on a Washington street. He shot the President. He also shot my husband.

I'm not asking for your sympathy. I'm asking for your help.

I've learned from my own experience that, alone, there's only so much you can do to stop handgun violence. But that together, we can confront the mightiest gun lobby–the N.R.A.–and win.

I've only to look at my husband Jim to remember that awful day... the unending TV coverage of the handgun firing over and over... the nightmare panic and fear.

It's an absolute miracle nobody was killed. After all, twenty thousand Americans are killed by handguns every year. Thousands more–men, women, even children–are maimed for life.

Like me, I know you support *stronger* handgun control laws. So does the vast majority of Americans. But the National Rifle Association can spend so much in elections that Congress is afraid to pass an effective national handgun law.

It's time to change that. Before it's too late for another family like mine... a family like yours.

I joined Handgun Control, Inc. because they're willing to take on the N.R.A. Right now we're campaigning for a national waiting period and background check on handgun purchases.

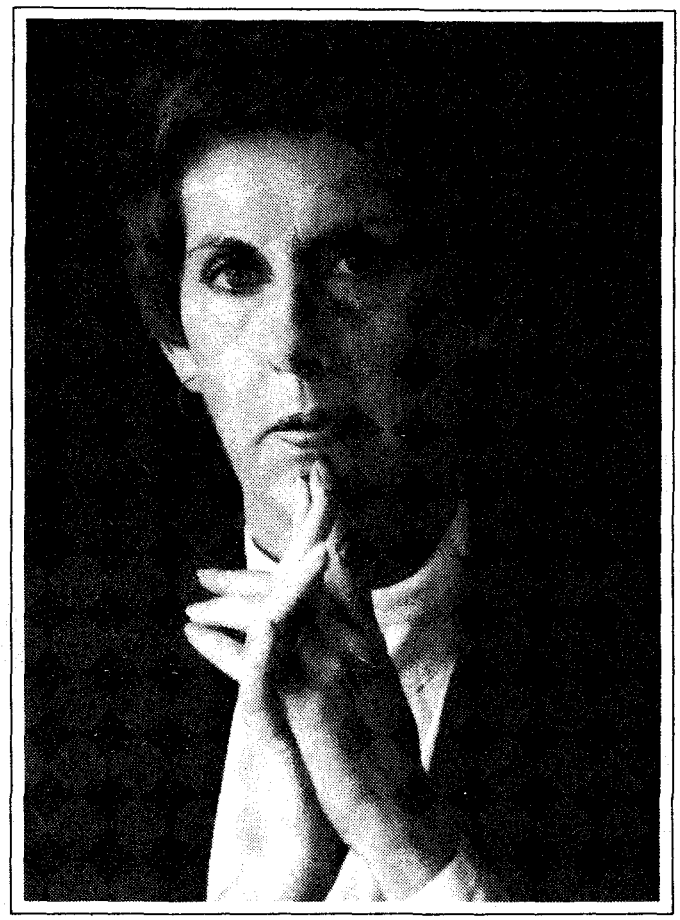
If such simple, basic measures had been on the books six years ago, John Hinckley would never have walked out of that Texas pawnshop with the handgun which came within an inch of killing Ronald Reagan. He lied on his purchase application. Given time, the police could have caught the lie and put him in jail.

Of course, John Hinckley's not the only one. Police report that thousands of known criminals buy handguns right over the counter in this country. We have to stop them.

So, please, pick up a pen. Fill out the coupon. Add a check for as much as you can afford, and mail it to me today.

It's time we kept handguns out of the wrong hands. It's time to break the National Rifle Association's grip on Congress and start making our cities and neighborhoods safe again.

Thank you and God bless you."



## *"Together we can win."*

***Dear Sarah,***

It's time to break the N.R.A.'s grip on Congress once and for all. Here's my contribution to Handgun Control, Inc., the million-strong nonprofit citizens' group you help direct:

☐ $15 ☐ $25 ☐ $35 ☐ $50 ☐ $100 or $_____.

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